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THE SPIRIT OF  
CHINESE CULTURE



# THE SPIRIT OF CHINESE CULTURE

By  
FRANCIS C. M. WEI

中國文化

1947

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A



To HER

Without Whose Constant Inspiration These  
Lectures Would Not Have Been Written



## FOREWORD

WE HAVE here a subject of central importance treated by a master. Nothing is more fundamental to a people's life than the ideals which shape it. To understand the Chinese we must know the basic convictions which underlie their culture and which have been instilled in them for centuries. The momentous revolution through which the Chinese have been passing for the past five decades has affected every phase of their civilization. Even the spiritual heritage of the nation is weakened and at times appears to be disappearing. For many the assumptions which control the morals and the outlook on the universe and its meaning seem to have gone and nothing is taking their place. Self-seeking and inner frustration are tragic features of a chaotic picture. Yet the ancient patterns have by no means completely passed. They still condition the Chinese. Presumably they are to do so for untold generations. If we are to know the Chinese we must become aware of the systems of thought and the religions which have had so large a share in making them what they are.

This insight into the Chinese is of peculiar importance for Americans. The course of history has brought them ever more intimately into relations with that great people. In a variety of ways they have assumed large and

increasing responsibilities in China. If they are not to err grievously they must really know the Chinese and seek to understand the springs of the attitudes and actions of these trans-Pacific neighbors.

Toward the comprehension of the spirit of the Chinese and their culture Dr. Wei is a superb guide. A Chinese by birth and nurture, he knows his people and the unseen forces which have molded them. He is a specialist on the religion and the philosophies of his people. He is intimately familiar with the pertinent documents. More than that, he has never been uprooted from the ongoing life of the nation as have so many of his Western-trained fellow-countrymen. He has shared the vicissitudes of the nation, partly as president of one of the educational institutions which the Japanese invasion forced into painful westward migration, and partly through connection with the government. At the same time he knows the Occident and so is able to bridge the gulf between that part of the world and China. He has studied both in the United States and Great Britain and has been lecturer at several of the leading universities in the United States. Sympathetic with the deepest insights of the Chinese spirit, he is also a Christian. Few can equal him and none can surpass him as an interpreter of the Soul of China to the English-speaking world.

K. S. LATOURETTE

New Haven, Connecticut, January, 1947.

## PREFACE

I AM sending forth this series of Hewett Lectures delivered in 1946 chiefly because so many people who heard them at Andover-Newton Theological School, Newton Centre, Massachusetts, the Episcopal Theological School, Cambridge, Massachusetts and Union Theological Seminary, New York, have expressed their desire to see them in print. This may mean that there are others who are interested in the subject.

It is needless to say that the subjects I have attempted to cover in the six chapters are so broad and in many ways so complicated that I had to pick only the salient points for my treatment. As far as possible I have avoided technical and most of the controversial issues which are dealt with in some of my other writings. What is presented in this book represents at least the point of view of one Chinese student of the philosophy and religions of his own people, after many years of research and reflection. Naturally this point of view may not be that of many Western writers who have treated the same topics. One advantage the present writer has is that he has not only studied the philosophy and religions of his own people, but has actually lived through them and has grown up in the atmosphere of the cultural heritage of the nation.

I wish to take this opportunity to express my appreciation to the Hewett Foundation Committee for its invitation to be the first oriental to deliver the lectures to the audiences in the three theological seminaries, together with many from outside these institutions of theological learning, who gave me such cordial attention at the delivery of the lectures.

FRANCIS C. M. WEI

New York,  
May 30, 1946

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THE SPIRIT OF  
CHINESE CULTURE



## 1

CHRISTIANITY AND CHINESE  
CULTURE*Chinese Civilization and Culture*

WHEN a Chinese starts talking about his own country and his people he is apt to seem bombastic even though he exercises self-restraint. But the bare facts must be presented. One of the greatest countries of the world, extending from the island of Hainan to Manchuria and from Sikiang to the mouth of the Ussuri River, a compact continental area covering nearly all of Southeastern Asia, cut off by vast mountain masses on two sides and protected by the waters of the sea on the other two, China is geographically very favorably situated. Hers is about as large a territory as that of the United States of America.

Through many centuries and up until recent times, the Chinese have developed their own civilization in almost complete isolation from the rest of the world except for the most casual contacts, and that only when their civilization had practically taken its definite shape. This civilization has influenced Korea, Japan, Mongolia, Turkestan, Tibet, Siam (Thailand), Annam (Indochina), and Malaya. There is a variety of soil and climate, agricultural products and minerals. The Chi-

nese population is at present between one-fourth and one-fifth that of the whole world; it is intelligent, industrious, practical, frugal, and capable of hardship and long-suffering (sometimes almost too much so), always cheerful, always optimistic, extremely human, full of humor and common sense—all kept in balance by a keen sense of proportion. This has been the result of a long process of cultural development with written records of some four thousand years, and “no other nation with which the world is acquainted has preserved its type so unaltered”.\*

A keen western student of the civilizations of the world has made a succinct statement about the culture of the Chinese which is worth quoting. “The Indian and the Chinese civilizations along with Western civilization,” says Hendrik Kraemer, “are the three great and representative creations of the human spirit in the history of mankind, each one revealing a fascinating and very characteristic aspect of the human mind and its endless possibilities.” †

We would like to point out that a distinction ought to be made between civilization and culture, two terms which are often improperly used interchangeably. Civilization is the accumulated sum total of the achievements of a people up to a given time in their dealing with the

\* Quoted by P. M. Roxby in article “China” in *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. 14th Ed.

† H. Kraemer, *The Christian Message in a Non-Christian World*, New York, 1938, p. 147. By permission of the International Missionary Council.

physical environment and in trying to live together in a community; and culture is the spirit of that civilization embodied in human personalities. The former can be kept in literature and in the arts. It has a more concrete form and cannot be easily lost to posterity even if it should cease to be a living thing. Modern scholarship has succeeded, for instance, in recovering much of the classical civilization of Europe and has learned through archaeology and excavation more and more about ancient civilizations of even more remote ages. But it is far more difficult to reconstruct a dead culture. When its living embodiments become extinct it may fall into complete oblivion.

Even a rapid survey of the historical development, or a brief description of the characteristics, of Chinese culture, would be beyond the scope of this book. We shall confine our attention to the religion and the moral tradition of the people in the hope that by this study we may catch the spirit of their culture, and see whether the Christian message will find in it something congenial as a point of contact and as a medium for its presentation.

### *The Presentation of Christianity to the Chinese*

We are, therefore, approaching the Chinese religious and moral tradition not as anthropological studies for their pure intellectual interest, which has its proper place and value, but rather as a *praeparatio evangelica*,

to use Eusebius' expression. There will be more in this chapter on the value of such an approach. For the present let it suffice to observe that, "if the Church is to become the Church . . . of China . . . she must capture not only the hearts and wills of the people, but also their mind, their aesthetic sense, their imagination. Not only the grace and majesty of architecture, but the beauty of art, literature and music must spring from the very soul and soil of the people to express their adoration, as their instinct and genius prompt, when purified by Christ. What the creators of Norman and Gothic, what Raphael and Botticelli, Bach and Handel, Tyndale and Cranmer, Dante, Milton and Robert Browning have done for Western Christianity, glorifying God and exalting the spirit of man, must be done by Asiatics for Asia,"‡ by Chinese for China. And above all, we want to add that if Christianity is to be properly understood and received by the Chinese we can ill afford to neglect their cultural background.

It is hardly necessary to say that we do not study the Chinese culture and religion as antiquarian research. The culture of the Chinese is still the living culture of a large section of mankind and the religions in China are still potent spiritual forces operative today among millions of people.

Why should Christianity, then, be sent to the Chinese? Do they not already have their own religions, better suited to their own needs, their climate and condi-

‡ C. E. Storrs, *Many Creeds, One Cross*, New York, 1945, pp. 8-9. By permission of The Macmillan Company, Publishers.

tion? Is it not impertinent to try to proselytize a people as highly cultured as the Chinese?

These are old questions and are still being asked in their new forms. According to J. N. Farquhar, people often say in India that all religions are true and therefore they are all the same. § It is easy enough to show that if religions have something in common, if they have developed in some cases similar teachings and institutions and inculcate much the same ideas of morality, therefore, to that extent, they are good and true. But it does not follow that they are the same. Resemblances between Christianity and some of the religions in the Orient do not make any of the religions a good substitute for the Christian faith. Beneath the superficial similarities we often find radical differences. In the religions of the Chinese there is saintliness; there is spiritual mastery and noble achievement among the choice spirits; but this should not cool our fervor to preach the Christian Gospel to the Chinese.

Another objection may be raised. It may be urged that Christianity has been developed in the West. It has become a part of the Western culture. Other racial groups with different cultures and living under different conditions may have their religious experience in a different way. Why should we go to disturb their faith? Why not let them alone? And these are common questions, asked today in many places even among good Christian people. What is the answer?

§ J. N. Farquhar, *Are All Religions True*, Mysore, 1920, p. 2.

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§ J. N. Farquhar, *Are All Religions True*, Mysore, 1920, p. 2.

The usual answer is that Christianity is the absolute religion. It is the perfected expression of religion as such, the consummation of the religious yearning of all men in all times and places. But as Ernst Troeltsch has pointed out, "The actual history of religion knows nothing of the common character of all religions, or of their natural upward trend towards Christianity . . . Christianity is itself a theoretical abstraction. It presents no historical uniformity . . . hence it can in no wise be represented as the finally attained unity and explanation of all that has gone before." || "If Christianity possesses any validity, that validity is to be restricted to Western Europe; for any religion to claim absolute validity is simply naïveté." ¶ It, therefore, "does not preclude the possibility that other racial groups, living under entirely different cultural conditions, may experience their contact with the Divine Life in quite a different way . . . And they may quite sincerely regard this as absolutely valid for them." \*

This is Troeltsch. How different is his position from that of Karl Barth and Hendrik Kraemer! Barth endeavors "to lay bare the exclusive nature of Biblical religious truth as wholly *sui generis* "† He rejects all natural theology. To regard all religions as more or less worthy vehicles of divine revelation is, for him, virtu-

|| Ernst Troeltsch, "The Place of Christianity among the World Religions" in his *Christian Thought*, London, 1923, pp. 12-13.

¶ *Ibid.* p. 17.

\* *Ibid.* pp. 26-27.

† Hendrik Kraemer, *op. cit.* pp. 115-116.

ally to deny all revelation. There is no continuity between "nature" and "grace", or between "reason" and "revelation". ‡ Hence between Christianity and the other religions there is "no point of contact." §

This is also Kraemer's own position in his volume, *The Christian Message in a Non-Christian World*. For Kraemer Christ fulfils these religions [i.e. the non-Christian religions] by contradicting them. For Christ, the power of God and the wisdom of God, stands in contradiction to the power and the wisdom of man. Yet, Dr. Kraemer also maintains that we should not deny that God has been working in the minds of men outside the sphere of the Christian revelation, and that there have been and may be now acceptable men of faith, who live under the sway of the non-Christian religions—products, however, not of these non-Christian religions, but of the mysterious workings of God's spirit.|| Here it is admitted that even in the non-Christian religions God does not leave Himself without witness; His spirit works there.

Is it because of his tremendous zeal for the Christian missionary movement that Kraemer is so strong in his language in condemning the non-Christian religions? He seems to be afraid that in seeing too much in these religions there may be the danger of diluting our enthusiasm for Christian propaganda. Every Christian will

‡ *Ibid.* pp. 118-119.

§ *Ibid.* p. 131.

|| *Cf. Ibid.* pp. 123-124.

agree with him that "God has revealed *the Way* and *the Life* and *the Truth* in Jesus Christ and wills this to be known through all the world." ¶ But to quote Kraemer himself, "no man, and certainly no Christian, can claim the power or the right to limit God's revelatory working." \* God has revealed Himself also in religions and philosophies outside of Judaism and Christianity. Of course, when the philosophies and religions raise any protest against the cardinal elements of the Christian faith, it is right to say that as far as that goes the God of the philosophers and the scholars, however lofty the conception may be, is not the God and Father of Jesus Christ. † But it is, on the other hand, quite possible and not infrequent that we find in the great non-Christian religions suggestions of the Christian God and in some places an atmosphere congenial to the presentation of the Christian truth, where we find even a *praeambula fidei*. Wherever this is the case, we believe with Thomas Aquinas that *gratia non tollit sed perficit naturam* (grace does not destroy but perfects nature).

We take the Christian message to the non-Christian world, not because it is in total darkness, not because the people in it have never been granted by God even a glimpse of His glory in their groping, but because we have the Good News and "its very nature forbids us to say that it may be the right belief for some but not for

¶ *Ibid.* p. 107.

\* *Ibid.* p. 122.

† *Ibid.*

others.”‡ ‘We do not go to the nations called non-Christian, because they are the worst in the world and they alone are in need; we go because they are a part of the world and share with us in the same human need—the need of redemption from ourselves and from sin, the need to have life complete and abundant and to be remade after this pattern of Christlikeness.’§ This motive is so impelling that in spite of the condition of the Church and its present position in the world, which seem to make it poorly equipped for renewed missionary consecration and activity, we still go to those parts of the world where the name of Christ is less frequently proclaimed in order to share our knowledge of Him, inadequate as it may be, with others. This must be admitted. The question is what method should be used in the missionary work and what should be the Christian attitude towards the old religions that are already found deeply rooted in a country like China.

### *Christianity and the Religions of the Chinese*

We leave to later chapters the treatment in greater detail of the religions which are generally known under the names of the Classical Religions of China—Confucianism, Buddhism, Taoism, and the Religion of the People. For the present let us confine our attention to the problem of the Christian attitude towards these religions

‡ Statement adopted at the meeting of the International Missionary Council, Jerusalem, 1928. Jerusalem Meeting, vol. 1, p. 404.

§ *Ibid.* p. 406.

and how far they may be utilized in presenting the Christian message to the Chinese people. It may be that the best approach to this problem is a review of the Christian missionary movement in China up to the present time.

It is well known that Christianity is nothing new to the Chinese. One tradition has it that the first missionary to China was St. Thomas the Apostle. But we can find little or no reliable historical evidence for this.

The history of Christianity in China, however, goes back as far as the seventh century of the Christian era. According to a stone monument uncovered in 1623 or 1625 A.D. near Sian, the old capital of China, a monument erected in the year 781 A.D. and known since its discovery as the Nestorian Tablet, the Nestorian missionary A-lo-pêñ arrived in the Chinese capital of the T'ang Dynasty in 635 A.D. during the illustrious reign of the great emperor, T'ai Tsung. The emperor regarded the new religion quite graciously. Tradition has it that he even accepted it himself. While we cannot be sure of this, he at least studied it, and from several of his successors on the throne it received considerable favor. It is in the Chinese records that imperial decrees were issued ordering its dissemination. But two hundred and ten years later in 845 A.D. the Buddhists in China were persecuted by the Emperor Wu Tsung as a result of court intrigue, and the Nestorians, who in the eyes of the Chinese at the time were merely another Buddhist sect, suffered the same fate. When the storm blew over,

Buddhism was able to rise again, but not Nestorian Christianity. By 987 A.D. it was reported that there were no Christians in the Chinese Empire. The first attempt to Christianize China thus came to an end apparently because the Nestorians went too far in compromising with Buddhism, an older religion in the country. Christianity paid a heavy price for losing its identity. It had no contribution to make to the religious life of the Chinese, at least from the point of view of the Chinese who could not distinguish it from another religion.

The second attempt to plant Christianity in China was made during the Mongol Dynasty which began in 1279 A.D., more than four hundred years after the fatal persecution of the Nestorians. In 1289 Kubilai, the Mongol ruler, established an office in his government for the supervision of Christians in China. Who were these Christians and where did they come from? There seem to have been some thousands of Nestorians in the country at that time. In the early part of the fourteenth century they were found in eastern China around Hang-chow and Chinkiang, in the northwest in Kansu, in the north in modern Hopei, and in the southwest in Yunnan. Apparently they were not the remnants of the Nestorians from the earlier period. They were known as Arkagun, almost entirely of foreign birth. How and when they got to China is not certain. They must have come from the Uigurs with the conquering Mongol army, and the Uigurs were a Turkish people, in part Nestorian, with whom the Mongols had been in contact.

But these Nestorians were not the only Christians in China under the Mongols. There were also Roman Catholics. Two Italian merchants, Maffeo and Nicolo Polo, brothers, were asked by Kubilai to take letters from the Imperial Court to the Pope asking that "a hundred teachers of science and religion be sent to instruct the Chinese in the learning and faith of Europe." || The missionaries from Rome were slow in coming and not a hundred actually came. The first to arrive was John of Montecorvino, a Franciscan. More Franciscans came later to join him, and their missionary work had a good measure of success. But in 1368, the Mongol rule in China came to an end. With the foreign rulers went also the foreign missionaries from China. The Nestorians seem to have disappeared at the same time, and according to Professor Latourette, "no certain traces of the Faith were found by the Jesuits in the latter part of the sixteenth century." || Thus closed another chapter of the Christian movement in China. Like the Christians in the T'ang Dynasty the Christians in China during the Mongol Dynasty failed to leave any permanent influence on Chinese life and thought. It is true that they were in the country for less than a hundred years and they were too intimately associated with the much hated foreign rulers to be popular with the Chinese. Also because of the adopted policy of the Mongols to be indifferent to

|| K. S. Latourette, *History of Christian Missions in China*, New York, 1929, p. 67. By permission of the Macmillan Company, publishers.

¶ *Ibid.* p. 75.

the Chinese culture and to stand aloof from the Chinese civilization, the Christians who depended upon the favor of the Mongol rulers for their existence in China would not and could not be closely related to the Chinese religious or moral traditions. But such reasons would not apply to the Nestorians under the T'angs. They were in China for a much longer period. The T'ang Emperors, who showed them favor until they were persecuted along with the Buddhists, were Chinese and were great patrons of the Chinese culture and civilization. The Nestorians failed because they erred at the other extreme. They were so closely associated with the Buddhists that they lost their distinctiveness. Instead of using external resemblances as mere points of contact to present their own faith, they sacrificed their identity and the essentials of their own religion. The price they paid for this was extinction.

After the Nestorians and the Roman Catholics under the Mongol Dynasty, Christianity disappeared from China for almost two centuries. Francis Xavier, who went to Japan as a missionary in 1549, planned to enter China also but he only reached an island near Canton in 1551 and died there the next year, without reaching the mainland. Later missionaries were able to carry out his hope to enter China. Among the Jesuit missionaries who worked in China there was the famous Matteo Ricci, a mathematician and astronomer as well as a great missionary. It was the policy of the Jesuits to reach the upper classes in Chinese society without

neglecting the poor and the uneducated. This met with a good measure of success. Chinese scholars and high officials such as Hsü Kuang-ch'i and Li Tzu-chao were won, and the Jesuits were in favor with the Imperial Court.

Soon the Dominicans came also and they were followed by the Augustinians. In spite of sporadic persecutions the Christian work went ahead and flourished. This third attempt to evangelize China promised a rich harvest. But then rose the controversies among the missionaries as to the Chinese term to be used for God, as to whether Chinese Christians should be permitted to participate in the age-long ceremonies in honor of Confucius as the greatest teacher of the Chinese and in commemoration of the deceased ancestors, and as to whether Christians should be allowed to contribute to Chinese community festivals. For the Jesuits who favored a liberal policy, the term Shang-ti used in the ancient Confucian classics, particularly in the *Book of Odes* and the *Book of History*, ought to be a good translation for the term God in the Bible and in Christian prayers. To the Dominicans, however, this was a pagan term and they preferred the term T'ien Chu which literally translated would mean "the Lord of Heaven". They were apparently not aware that this was a Buddhist term for very inferior gods. The Franciscans and the Augustinians sided with the Jesuits against the Dominicans. The more liberal-minded groups were inclined to interpret the rites in honor of Confucius and of the deceased ancestors as purely civil ceremonies with-

out any religious significance and the community festivals as mere community activities, which were and have always been the Chinese interpretations. Of course, everything concerning the more spiritual side of life is capable of degenerating into superstition and these rites in the minds of the uneducated Chinese may at any time have a superstitious element. The Dominicans condemned such rites and would ban the Chinese Christians from participation in them. The questions were first referred to the Chinese Emperor who, being a Chinese scholar—and though a Manchu quite inclined to encourage Chinese culture—was in favor of a broad interpretation. The liberal groups of missionaries were, therefore, winning the issue. But the Dominicans appealed to Papal authority which held an opinion opposite to that of the Emperor. The interview of the Papal legate and his interpreter with the Emperor K'ang Hsi in 1706 only aggravated the situation, practically resulting in the expulsion of the representatives of the Pope from China. Among the missionaries the controversy dragged on; it was finally ended only by the Pope's decree in 1742 in favor of the view taken by the Dominicans. This enraged the Emperor Ch'ien Lung, on the throne at that time, who held about the same opinion on the matter as his great predecessor, K'ang Hsi. At least he could not tolerate in his domain the presence of foreigners who would regard the authority of a non-Chinese ruler outside of China as superior to his own and he would not make the fine distinction between ecclesiastical and po-

litical authority. This was, of course, prior to the day of extraterritoriality! Christian missionaries were practically banned and persecutions became more severe and more frequent in various localities. The Christian community declined steadily both in numbers and in morale so that "in the first quarter of the nineteenth century, the future of the church," to use Professor Latourette's words, "was very dark." \* Such was the Christian movement in China during the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the third attempt to plant the church in Chinese soil.

The failures of the first three attempts to bring Christianity to China were so unfortunate that we would pause to recount the cause of their failures before we consider the present Christian movement in China.

The Nestorians of the T'ang Dynasty and the Christians during the Mongol period left no significant traces behind them in China. There is the tablet found in ancient Sian; there have been unearthed a few tracts from the Tun-huang grottoes; and there are a few casual references to these Christians in the Chinese records. As far as Chinese life and thought are concerned, Christianity might never have been in the country, even though as Professor Latourette has pointed out, "Nestorians were in China probably continuously for nearly two and a half centuries, or for almost the length of time that elapsed between the founding of the Church and the acceptance of the faith by Constantine." "Why

\* *Ibid.* p. 181.

was it," Professor Latourette asks, "that the fate of the same religion was so different in two empires which were probably so nearly equal in area, population, and culture?" Professor Latourette gives his own answers, which we would not take the time to quote here. The one we would venture is that the Christians both during the T'ang Dynasty and in the Mongol period had failed to understand the essence of Chinese culture and to make a real impact upon it or utilize it as a medium for presenting Christianity to the Chinese.

### *Present Christian Movement in China*

Since the early years of the nineteenth century a new and more vigorous movement has been forging ahead to bring Christianity to the Chinese again. In this movement the Protestants have been playing a more important part. In every way the result seems to be encouraging. True, the Chinese Christians in China constitute only a little more than one-half of one per cent of the Chinese population. If we should count only those outside the Roman Catholic Church they are only about one-tenth of one per cent. But our total impact upon the nation as a whole is far greater than our numerical strength. In every walk of life in the country we find Chinese Christians in responsible positions and they hold the respect of the people for their ability, their sense of responsibility, their reliability, their devotion to the work to which they are entrusted, and their moral integrity. Although this cannot be said of every Chinese

Christian, as Chinese are also human, yet it represents the general impression, and in matters like this it is the general impression that counts. The impression has been particularly favorable during the war years, not only on account of the refugee work and relief activities often undertaken by missionaries and Chinese Christians alike at great risk and sometimes by supreme sacrifice of life, but also because of the Christian attitude towards life brought more into prominence by the unusual times, the willingness of Christians to bear hardship for a good cause, their capacity for suffering, if necessary, their firmness in standing for the right and the true, their unflinching faith that the righteous will triumph. When those around them are in despair, they have hope and see a meaning in the apparently adverse course of events. They refuse to be discouraged by evil and their faith is often justified.

This is saying much, and yet when we think of the small minority in which we Christians find ourselves in the population of four hundred and sixty-five million, more than 99 per cent of which is still to be reached, when the Church in China is confronted with social, economic, political, moral, and cultural problems unprecedented in history, we cannot feel complacent about the Church in China.

In comparison with the development of Buddhism in China, however, the Christian movement among the Chinese has much to feel proud of. In this comparison we must take the Christian movement since the landing of

Robert Morrison in China in 1807, as there was so little of Christianity left in the country from the earlier attempts to evangelize the Chinese. From 1807 to the present time only one hundred and thirty-eight years have elapsed. Buddhism was introduced into China in about 67 A.D. according to history, although from casual references in the Chinese historical records it may have been known in China much earlier than this. Yet, taking even 67 A.D. as the date of the introduction of Buddhism into China, there were certainly not the number of ordained Buddhist monks who were Chinese by the end of the second century of the Christian era as we have ordained Christian ministers in China today; and monks in the Buddhist community would correspond to ordained ministers in the Christian Church. We know for certain that the first Chinese Buddhist monk was ordained only after the third century of the Christian era.

We cannot boast that there are many Chinese, clerical or lay, who have a grasp of the Christian teachings and of what the Church really stands for, leaving aside technical theology and the controversial issues as to the nature and function of the Church. Chinese Christian literature is still at the initial stage of development and aside from the translations of the Bible we are not sure how much of it is of permanent value. But on the other hand, history tells us that for more than two hundred years Buddhism in China depended on Buddhists from other countries for the production of Buddhist literature

in the Chinese language and that literature consisted exclusively of translations. Genuinely Chinese interpretation of Buddhism by Chinese Buddhist scholars did not begin until 291 A.D. when sutras sent back by the first Chinese pilgrim to the West, Chu Tzu-hsing, who left China in 260 A.D. to cross the Gobi desert to Yu-t'ien in search of Buddhist literature, were translated into Chinese by one of his disciples, adapting to Buddhist use terms and concepts in Taoist philosophy and in the *Book of Changes*, which became the method in interpreting Buddhist ideas to the Chinese until at least the middle of the fourth century. Kumārajīva, who was brought as a captive to the Chinese capital, Chang-an, in 401 A.D. and died there in 413 A.D., translated thirty-nine—some say seventy-three—Buddhist works into Chinese. He was a great translator. But his translations could not be compared with those of Hsüan-tsang, the noted Chinese Buddhist traveler, translator, and scholar, who returned to China in 645 A.D. after seventeen years in India, and whose *Ta T'ang Hsi Yu Chi* or *Memoirs of the Western Regions* has become a standard work for study not only of Buddhist history but also of geography and Indian antiquities. But Buddhism in China had waited for almost six hundred years for such a genius; what then is a century and a half for Christianity in China? People who are impatient today with the quality of Chinese Christian literature may well bear this in mind.

And it is so easy to overestimate the influence of Buddhism. No one can ever deny that the Buddhist influence on Chinese painting and sculpture has been very significant. Buddhism has left many traces in popular Chinese religious thinking. During the T'ang Dynasty some of the noted Chinese literary men were markedly impressed by it. A few Buddhist tracts have been widely used, but how much they have been understood is another question. Perhaps very little, for the Buddhist literature is after all a closed book to the Chinese except for a select few. *Karma* is a good supplement to the Chinese idea of retribution handed down from remote antiquity and deeply planted in the Chinese mind, but the teachings that all is impermanence, that there is no ego, and that *nirvana* is the only calm, "the three-fold corner-stone upon which rests the entire fabric of Buddhism, be it Hinayanism or . . . Mahayanism," † have been grasped by very few indeed in China. After eighteen hundred years of Buddhism we can hardly find any trace of the teaching of Gautama, the Buddha, or of his followers in the family and the social structure of the Chinese, in Chinese economic thought or practice, in law, government and political ideas. In these areas of Chinese life Confucianism has found no rival in Buddhism. Buddhism is other-worldly and, as an ultra-mundane system of religion and philosophy, is impotent in the field nearest to the Chinese heart. Fur-

† Yamakami Sogen, *Systems of Buddhistic Thought*, Calcutta, 1912, p. 7.

thermore, Buddhism is soothing but not at all pungent as a spiritual force, and society needs some caustic all the time lest it be soothed to sleep.

Has Christianity been sufficiently and effectively enough a gad-fly to the present day world as the *dæmon* was to Socrates? That is what we Christians in China would want our faith and our life to be in our country—a real impact upon the nation which is in the making under our very eyes.

How can this be brought about? First of all, Christianity must be understood, and understood by the Chinese without the odium of a foreign religion. This means that the Chinese culture must be utilized as a medium for the presentation of the Christian religion to the Chinese, that Christian teachings must be put, at the initial stage at least, in terms of Chinese thought-forms and according to the Chinese philosophical, religious, artistic and social genius. We would want to experiment and see how far the old Chinese ways, the old Chinese symbols and methods of self-expression in prayer and worship can be adapted to Christian use, what there is in the Chinese philosophical and religious tradition that is congenial to Christianity, and what elements of truth we can find there that may serve as our first point of contact.

This is not what Frank Rawlinson in his book, *Naturalization of Christianity in China*, is thinking about. We do not search for resemblances. We do not have much confidence in the comparative method which is too

abstract for our purpose. We agree with Kraemer here that "no help can be derived from an abstract approach to religions in the abstract, but only from a concrete approach to a concrete reality." ‡ In attempting to find resemblances by the comparative method, one is apt to select certain features of a religion or to single out certain teachings entirely from their context. But no such abstractions can do justice to the religion we study. We must see these features and understand these ideas in the spirit of the whole. As Wilhelm Koepp has put it succinctly in German, "*Systematisch Erkennen dient der Erkenntnis vor allem durch die klare Einstellung alles Einzelnen in die umfassende Ganzheit des Erkenntnisgegenstandes. Die Durchsichtigkeit des Ganzen lässt jede Einzelheit in neuer und heller Eindeutigkeit erscheinen.*" (Systematic knowing serves knowledge above all by a clear presentation of all details in a comprehensive whole of the objects of knowledge. The transparency of the whole enables each detail to appear in a newer and more illuminating distinctness.) §

### *Interpreting Christianity in Terms of Chinese Culture*

When one undertakes to study any cultural system, it is necessary to attempt to enter into its spirit by trying always to see it as a whole. Then, and not until then, are we in a position to *interpret* the single ideas in it, and the "power to interpret", to quote Professor Hocking, "is

‡ *Op. cit.* p. v.

§ *Einführung in die Evangelische Dogmatik*, Tübingen, 1934, p. 11. Translation mine.

the power to say more truly or in more understandable language what an idea or a usage 'means'; to interpret is to give a voice to what is relatively inarticulate and defenseless." || In this way we are not conceiving God as "the Pedagogue" || but attempting to find "in the revealing light of Christ" "the groping for God" \* of the non-Christian religions and philosophies in China, and thereby getting hold of the best in those systems and incorporating it into the heritage of the Ecumenical Church.

In doing this we do not for a moment surrender our conviction that the Truth revealed in Jesus Christ is absolute. But we believe that its expression is not final, for we believe that the Spirit of truth will continue to guide us into all truth.† Does not even Kraemer say that "all religions, not excepting the 'primitive' ones, can be called religions of revelation"? ‡ If so, it must be the revelation, inadequate as it may be, of the One God, not of other gods. As the late Archbishop of Canterbury, William Temple, puts it, "The conscience of the heathen man is the voice of Christ within him—though muffled by his ignorance. All that is noble in the non-Christian systems of thought or conduct or worship is the work of Christ upon them and within them. By the Word of God—that is to say, by Jesus Christ—Isaiah,

|| W. E. Hocking, *Living Religions and a World Faith*, New York, 1940, p. 198. By permission of the Macmillan Company, publishers.

¶ Kraemer, *op. cit.* p. 117.

\* *Ibid.* p. 139.

† John 16:13

‡ *Op. cit.* p. 142.

and Plato, and Zoroaster, and Buddha, and Confucius conceived and uttered such truths as they declared. There is only one divine light; and every man in his measure is enlightened by it." §

It must be admitted that, to have an expression of the Christian teachings nearer to finality, we must bring to the altar of God, the Creator of the whole universe and the fountain of all truth, the historic cultures of all peoples, representing the accumulated experience of many large sections of mankind for long ages and have them consecrated to His Church. We believe that the revelation of God is progressive and until man grows to the fulness of the stature of His Son it remains unfinished. With Professor Hocking we believe in "the perpetual contemporaneousness, personalness, and novelty of the unfolding of the meaning of its truth." ||

We agree with Professor Hocking that "like every living being, Christianity has two selves—its potential, or ideal self, and its empirical or actual self. The latter is the Christianity of our present grasp and practice. In its ideal character, Christianity is the 'anticipation of the essence' of all religion, and so contains potentially all that any religion has. But it is quite too complacent to say this of the Christianity of our apprehension." || Kraemer admits this, for he says, "We have also, fortunately, unlearned the rash and erroneous

§ William Temple, *Readings in St. John's Gospel*, First Series, New York, 1939, p. 10.

|| *Op. cit.* p. 197.

¶ *Ibid.* p. 249.

identification of empirical Christianity with the revelation of Christ in consequence of which this empirical Christianity, which belongs to the relative sphere of history, was wrongly regarded and treated as of absolute character.” \*

There is, therefore, room for this empirical Christianity to improve itself, to make it a more adequate and more effective expression of the life and spirit of its Founder. It is not just because “when the several great systems of faith are brought, as now, into intimate contact, there is a new era of broadening, in which each religion extends its base to comprise what it finds valid in other strands of tradition.” † It is the intrinsic right of Christianity to claim truth as its own wherever it finds it, for there is only one God and one Truth, and its base is broad enough to comprise all truth wherever found. Professor Hocking looks very hard for values in other religions which Christianity does not have, and he finds a dignity, a sweep, a sense of the instant majesty of God in Islam; naturalness of the meditative element and serenity of spirit in Hinduism; the enjoyment of the impersonal element of ultimate truth in Buddhism; and the intense humanity, the prevalent cheerfulness and the inner gaiety in Confucianism.‡ Do we have to broaden the base of Christianity to comprise these virtues in our religious life or are they virtues which we as Christians are expected to cultivate accord-

\* *Op. cit.* p. 145.

† Hocking, *op. cit.* p. 190.

‡ *Ibid.* p. 255 ff.

ing to our faith but have not cultivated them? And is not this failure largely due to the fact that Christianity is "a western religion" because of its "embroilment with western civilization and history?" §

The remedy is not religious eclecticism which Professor Hocking proposes as the world faith of the future, but a new interpretation of Christianity in terms of every civilization with which it comes in contact. In this way the special strength and virtue of all the religious traditions may be brought into the Christian Church, each as a new emphasis to supplement the "empirical" Christianity which we at present recognize as predominantly western, and we may have an entirely fresh vision of the glory of our Faith. In this light our study of other religions and cultures should not lessen in any way our sense of urgency in taking our Good News to peoples with cultures different from those of the West but enhance it, for we see clearly that not only do those peoples need the Faith of the Christian Church, but also the Christian Church needs their cultures in order to give it a fuller expression that it may become more ecumenical. We do not pose Christianity as the thesis and the other religions as the antithesis with a new world faith as the synthesis. This Hegelian dialectic may be a lure to the mind that relishes Hegelianism, but Christian faith sees in Christ the full revelation of God, and the full understanding of Him is possible only when we see Him face to face. If Oscar Buck is right that "it is in Asia—not in

§ *Ibid.* p. 242.

America or Europe or Africa—that the future of the Christian religion will be determined,” || the Christian Church must come to grips with the problem of finding its new interpretation in terms of the Asiatic cultures, and that of the Chinese is not the least of them.

Christianity has nothing to fear from this. In the words of Professor Hocking, “it has lived for two millennia in company with a diverse activity in western philosophizing and in letters, and for three hundred years with a group of independent sciences. Alone among the great religions, Christianity has fought out its issues with the natural sciences, has passed through the purge of scientific study of itself as an object, its ‘higher criticism’, its comparative science of religion, its psychology of religion. It has met outspoken criticism on the part of these free agencies; and it has gained from this ordeal a capacity not alone to defend itself but to perceive what is defensible and what not defensible . . . It has been disciplined, hardened, and made agile.” ||

This being the case, Christianity has nothing to fear in her contacts with the Eastern cultures, but has everything to gain from them. Truth will triumph. We shall find much that is congenial in the Chinese culture for the presentation of the Christian message. A new emphasis of our religion may thus be brought into prominence to supplement Western Christianity and to enrich the Christian heritage by bringing into it the cul-

|| *Christianity Tested*, New York, 1934, p. 19.  
¶ *Op. cit.* pp. 238-239.

tural heritage of China, which may mean the Christianization of that culture by purging from it whatever elements and features are not compatible with Christianity. In this way there may arise a Chinese theology, as we have had Greek theology and Latin theology, European theology and American theology, each according to the genius of the people, not to divide the Church in China from the Church in other lands, but to give a fuller expression to the Church of God in the world. This is an adventure in faith that demands of us daring experiments in Christian thinking and Christian living. A new day has dawned upon the world, especially upon China, an old nation, becoming young again. We must attempt great things for God. He will accomplish wonders for us. We must live in high expectancies. In this spirit we approach the problem of the cultural heritage of the Chinese and the Christian Church in China.

### *The Plan of This Book*

In the following five chapters we shall take up the study of Confucianism as the culture of the Chinese people, Buddhism as it has affected this culture, Taoism as a religion in China, and the interpretation of Christianity to the Chinese against their cultural background.

This is an ambitious task. Each one of these topics should require a whole book for its proper treatment. In our limited space, therefore, the study must needs be

very brief. We shall devote two chapters to Confucianism, partly because for our present purpose it is more important, being the real culture of the Chinese people, and partly because in books on that subject there has been so much misinterpretation which we shall attempt to correct. To present Confucianism as it has developed in the course of more than two thousand years from the pre-Confucian period to at least the end of the twelfth century of the Christian era, the Confucian literature, particularly of the earlier periods, must be critically studied and we have time only to indicate the bare results of critical scholarship. In this way we hope to show not only the historical development of the Chinese culture but also some of the traits of the Chinese mentality.

In our study of Buddhism we shall make no attempt even to outline the teachings of Gautama the Buddha and the philosophies of the various Buddhist schools that have been introduced into China and developed there. We shall endeavor rather to sketch the history of Buddhism in China, to show how it has been received by the Chinese, and what success and failure it has had in influencing the Chinese culture. Here again we desire to present some of our opinions which are not those generally accepted.

We shall make only brief references to Taoism as a philosophy, which in itself is an interesting subject. But we shall seek to present Taoism as a religion with its

origin in the second century of the Christian era. The Taoist philosophy has greatly influenced the Chinese culture, but only through Confucianism. Taoism as a religion is a movement among the masses of the Chinese people. In its origin as well as in its later development it is one of the most strange phenomena in the history of religion in the world. For eighteen hundred years it has been the most widespread religious influence among the Chinese. Its foundation is unhistorical and its theology unsound. Taoism has neither the charming philosophy of Buddhism nor the lofty moral teaching of Confucianism. For a long time it held its ground, but now, with the spread of modern education and scientific ideas in the country, its future seems to be doomed. However, it is not yet a dead issue and we believe it not amiss to devote one chapter to its consideration.

In our concluding chapter we shall indicate the general lines along which we in China may hope to interpret Christianity to the Chinese, what in the Chinese cultural heritage will serve as the best points of contact and where emphasis may be placed. Whatever Christian teachings we may try to interpret in terms of Chinese religious and philosophical ideas will be by way of illustration. There will be no attempt at any systematic reconstruction of Christian theology, which cannot be done in our limited space. We shall recommend a certain form of Church organization which may be more adaptable to the Chinese social structure, but it will be

a mere suggestion. If the religious history of the Chinese has taught us any lesson at all, it is the danger of being dogmatic, that anything we consider the best at present will be eventually accepted by a people who always take time in making a final choice. We are, however, sure of one thing, and that is, if Christianity is to take root in China, it must assume a Chinese form, congenial to the Chinese cultural heritage.

## CONFUCIANISM IN HISTORY

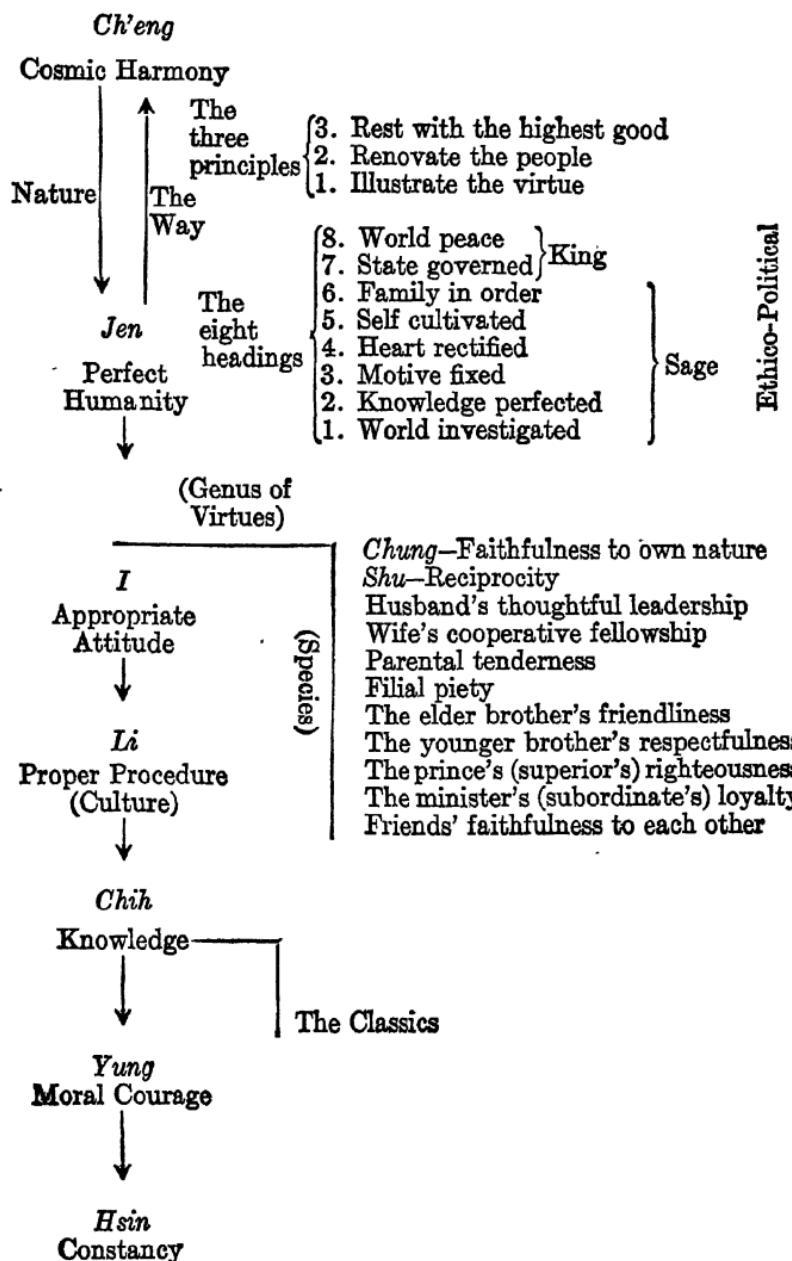
*What Is Confucianism?*

WHAT is Confucianism? Is it a religion or merely a system of moral teachings? Or, is there any system in it at all? These questions have often been asked but are not easily answered. In the first place the answers depend upon the definition of religion—which varies with almost every student of religion. But even more important than this is what we understand Confucianism to mean—the teachings of the historic person Confucius as recorded in certain of the classics known as Confucian, and what are the classics which we may ascribe to the man Confucius; or should we include under the term Confucianism all the teachings and all the institutions found in the Confucian classics, some of which are pre-Confucian, and how much the man Confucius had to do with any or all of these; or should we consider Confucianism as it has developed through the ages, at least down to the end of the twelfth century of the Christian era when the Confucian scholar and teacher, Chu Hsi, gave it the interpretation accepted as orthodox for the subsequent seven hundred years? These are not easy questions. When a writer does not answer them first, before drawing the conclusion that Confucianism

either is a religion or just an ethical system, the conclusion is not of much value.

Then, again, what is a religion? To make our position clear we say that a man will not have religion unless, first, he realizes that his own power alone will not enable him to have the kind of life he desires; secondly, that he believes there is a power or powers beyond him with a will like his own which may help him to have the kind of life he desires; thirdly, that he believes there is a way to enlist for his benefit that power or powers not by manipulation or by coercion but by persuasion; fourthly, that he acts according to this belief to enlist the help of that power or powers. If a man does not realize his own insufficiency, he can never develop that consciousness which we call religious. On the other hand if he should stop at that he would be in total despair, and no religious consciousness could develop in him. If he should believe that the manipulative method could be used to achieve his aim because the power or powers beyond himself have no will of their own, he would have what we now call science, but a humanistic science centered upon distinctly human interests and ideals. Should he resort to the coercive method, with the power or powers that have wills, it would be magic. If he should stop at the believing stage without corresponding action, the result would be philosophy, religious philosophy if you like, but not religion. Only when there is action according to the belief is there religion. This is true with religion at the most primitive stage of develop-

## A CHART of CONFUCIAN ETHICAL CONCEPTS



ment as well as with religion at the stage we call the highest. Whether fetishism is religion or magic depends upon the person's attitude towards the fetish and what he does with it to attain his desire. Whether Buddhism is religion or philosophy depends upon whether we take Buddhism as the teaching ascribed to Gautama the Buddha, or as it has developed later in Hinayanism and Mahayanism—and which sect of Mahayanism. Even the attitude of some Christians may be such that their belief may be called magic. On the other hand, the practices which we, from our point of view, call magic are really religious if we should analyze carefully the attitude behind them. We hesitate to introduce the term "superstition" into our discussion, for the term is so ambiguous and so often misused. One English dictionary defines it as "a belief in a religious system regarded (by others than the believer) as unreasonable." Any religious belief, then, may be regarded as superstitious by those who reject it as "unreasonable". We would call a religious belief superstitious only when it is incompatible with the total knowledge of the believer. This, then, is our conception of religion which does not lend itself easily to a simple definition. Whether Confucianism is a religion or not, according to this conception, depends upon what our conception of Confucianism is; we think of it as the system of ethico-political ideas of the Chinese as developed through the ages, and as such we see a religious element in it. It is the cultural system of the Chinese people.

*The Four-center Theory of the Cultural Development of the Chinese*

What do we mean by the Chinese? While we maintain that the Chinese people now have achieved cultural unity, we admit that in their racial and cultural formation they are mixed. Different elements have from period to period entered into their make-up through their long history of development.

We maintain further that the culture of the Chinese as we know it now had its origin in that period known in history as the Chou Dynasty—from the middle of the eleventh century to the latter part of the third century before the Christian era, over seven hundred years. Originally the people of the Chou era had occupied the area west of the modern Province of Shensi, but the barbarians pressed them farther east until they settled around modern Sian in Shensi. In the course of time their influence spread eastward along the Yellow River until it reached practically the mouth of the river. This was the domain of the Chou culture with certain of its traditions embodied now in the classics known as the *Shih Ching* or *Book of Odes* and the *Shu Ching* or *Book of History*, with detailed records in the classic called the *Ch'un Ch'iu* or the *Spring and Autumn Annals* with its three commentaries, the *Tso Chuan*, the *Kung Yang Chuan* and the *Ku Liang Chuan*, and the *I Li*. This Chou culture has been idealized in the two other *Li* books of a much later date, known as the *Chou Li*.

and the *Li Chi*. Because the great teacher Confucius and his school sought to preserve these traditions, those books came to be known as the Confucian Classics. It is chiefly from these classics that we have our knowledge of the Chou culture. This literature is representative of Confucianism. From the modern province of Honan came a philosopher of ancient China, Mo Ti, whose sphere of influence was south of the Yellow River, quite separate and distinct from that of the Confucian School. The teaching of Mo Ti represented a different tradition, harking back to the remote days of the Hsia Dynasty. No wonder it held opinions with regard to religion, ceremonies, music, and morality at variance with those of Confucius and his followers. It had a different cultural background and represented a more remote antiquity. It represented an arrested culture.

Towards the end of the Chou period, in the time of Mencius, at the beginning of the third century before Christ, the Chou culture came into contact, apparently for the first time, with another culture in the South. According to the writings of Mencius, he was encountered by a man, Hsu Hsing, who followed the teachings of Shên-nung, coming from the principality of Ch'u in the South. He criticized Mencius' political ideas which were Confucian and therefore entirely in accord with the Chou tradition. Chen Shan, a disciple of Ch'in Liang and the younger brother Sin, came too to the principality where Mencius was just starting some political reforms, because they were attracted by Mencius' policy.

But when they met Hsu Hsing, they were completely won over to his ideas against those of Mencius. Mencius was much irritated. After a long lecture to the two brothers, he said this to them: "I have heard of men using the doctrines of our great land to change barbarians, but I have never yet heard of any being changed by barbarians. Ch'in Liang was a native of Ch'u. Pleased with the doctrines of Chou-kung [Duke of Chou] and Chung-ni [Confucius], he came northwards to the Middle Kingdom and studied them. Among the scholars of the northern regions, there was perhaps none who excelled him . . . You and your brother followed him some tens of years, and when your master died, you have forthwith turned away from him . . . In the Praise-songs of Lu it is said, 'He smote the barbarians of the west and the north' . . . and you become their disciple again; it appears that your change is not good." \*

Mencius was fond of using strong language concerning any teaching or cultural tradition which was not of the Confucian School representing the Chou Dynasty. There was coming northwards in his time a strange culture which he considered barbarous. It was the Ch'u culture, which from the passage which we have just quoted, was apparently averse to any complicated political organization and would rather advocate the return to a simpler social structure. It represented most likely the same trend of social and political thinking as that of Lao-tzu whose name or school was not known

\* *Works of Mencius*, translated by James Legge, Book 3, Pt. 1, chap. 4. Shanghai, n.d.

to Mencius and whose ideas came into contact with the Confucian school in a frontal encounter at a later date, possibly a century later.

There were, therefore, three cultural centers known to China in the latter part of the Chou period: the Confucian culture in the central Yellow River valley, the Sung culture farther south harking back to an earlier era represented by the school of Mo Ti, and the Ch'u culture which gave rise to the Taoist philosophy as found in Lao-tzu, a book better known as the *Tao Tê Ching*. And soon appeared on the cultural horizon of China a fourth, that represented by the Legalists, the *Fa Chia*, of whom Shang Yang, or Lord Shang, and Han Fei are the best known. They flourished in that part of the country in which the Ch'ins had their rise, the upper Yellow River valley, in the northwest. It was this culture, rugged and vigorous, that Shih Huang Ti, the First Emperor of China, rightly called by Derk Bodde China's first unifier, exemplified and made odious to the Chinese historians who were biased by the Confucian tradition.

Which of these four cultures was truly Chinese? We give our verdict to Confucianism for two reasons. First, because China for over two thousand years has been Confucian. The teaching of the Confucian School has moulded her culture, her political system, her social structure, and the general outlook on life of her people. Secondly, the Confucian tradition has in course of time eliminated its rivals not only by winning its supremacy

in the minds of the Chinese but also by absorbing into itself the elements in the rival schools which seemed to be essential to its maintenance of that supremacy. It is this composite culture, the Chou culture with elements added to it from the other three cultures, that we call by the name Confucianism, the product of a long course of historical development. Confucianism thus understood is not merely a system of morals or of ethical teachings, but an ethico-political system with a religious element in it. It is a culture, the culture of the Chinese people. Why should it, then, bear the name of Confucius? This leads to our consideration of Confucius in the cultural history of China.

### *Confucius in the Cultural Development of the Chinese*

The life of Confucius covered the period 551-478 B.C. His was indeed a time when evil was rampant. The political and social organization of the Chou dynasty was rapidly crumbling. Disorder prevailed everywhere.† It was Confucius' conviction that, given a fair chance, he would be able to re-establish a benevolent government after the pattern of that of the sage-kings of China's golden age, with the ancient principles of morality properly set forth. This would be the remedy for all the social ailments of his time. To seek for such an opportunity he wandered from principality to principality, trying to find a prince who would listen to him. But all in

† Cf. *Ibid.*, Book III, Pt. 2, chap. 9.

vain except for a brief period in his own state of Lu, where he had a chance to put into effect his long cherished political ideas—only to meet with premature frustration, however, when the jealousy of a neighboring state was aroused and the mind of his own prince poisoned by mean intrigues. His influence was to be exerted in a different field.

Confucius returned home to devote his time to literary and educational work. According to tradition, he edited four of the five classics, the *Shih Ching*, the *Shu Ching*, the *Li* books, and the *I Ching*, writing some commentaries on the last, now known as the *I Appendices*, and wrote the fifth classic, the *Spring and Autumn Annals* or the *Ch'un Ch'iu*. A more radical view held by the famous Confucian scholar K'ang Yu-wei is that he originated them all.‡ There is little doubt that his "frequent themes of discourse were—the Odes, the History, and the maintenance of the Rules of Propriety." § How much he did in editing the classics now bearing those names is a question. He described himself as "a transmitter and not a maker." || If he did actually edit those books, we have no reason to believe that he deleted much or added any of his own ideas to them. A careful study of the *Analects*, which we accept to be the most reliable records of his teaching, leads us to the conclusion that he paid little or no attention to the *I Ching* which could

‡ See *Kung Tzu Kia Tzu Kao*. Cf. *Analects*, Book VII, chap. 17; Book IX, chap. 14.

§ *Analects*, Book VII, chap. 17.

|| *Analects*, Book VII, chap. 1.

have existed in his time only as a book of divination, and as such it hardly came into his purview. ¶

As far as the Confucian Four Books are concerned, there is only one place where the name of the *I Ching* is mentioned at all and that is in Book VII, chapter 16 of the *Analects*. There, Confucius is supposed to have remarked: "If some years were added to my life, I would give fifty to the study of the *Yi*, and then I might come to be without great faults." Much textual criticism has been written on this passage.\* But the Imperial Critical Commentaries on the Classics edited in the early part of the last dynasty have it that in an old text of the *Analects*, known by the name of *Lu Lun* instead of the character "*I*" meaning "changes", another character is

¶ In all the conversations between Confucius and his disciples and others, as well as in all his sayings recorded in the *Analects*, there is not a word about the *Book of Changes* or any of its ideas. Mencius is totally silent about the book, making no reference to it whatsoever. If he knew anything about it, he certainly ignored it completely. Hsün-tzu was another great teacher of the Confucian School about fifty years younger than Mencius. In his works, as we have them now, we find four references to the *I*, once in Essay V and thrice in Essay XXVII. The authenticity of the latter essay has been questioned by critical scholars of the book, and there is the possibility of interpolation with regard to the reference in the Essay V. It ought to be noted also that all four references are to the so-called Text of the *I Ching* and not to the *Appendices* which are supposed by tradition to have been written by Confucius. Hsün-tzu in his *Works* mentions the classics by name in three different places, but the *Book of Changes* is never included in the list. If Confucius had attached so much importance to the *Book of Changes* as the historian Ssu-ma Ch'ien does in his well-known historical records, it is difficult to understand why Mencius and Hsün-tzu paid no attention to it.

Mo Ti's silence is more understandable, for he harked back to an earlier tradition than that of the Chou.

\* For readers who do not use the Chinese written language easily, see footnote in Legge's translation of the passage.

used with the same sound but meaning "also". † If this is accepted as the correct reading of the text, the solitary documental evidence that Confucius ever had anything to do with the *Book of Changes* evaporates. Of course, the great historian Ssu-ma Ch'ien of the first century before the Christian era has written in his historical records that Confucius was so fond of the *Book of Changes* in his latter years and read it so constantly and diligently that the leather thongs of the bamboo slips of which the book was made were thrice worn out. But Ssu-ma Ch'ien wrote four hundred years after Confucius' death, and he is not known among modern scholars for his careful higher critical studies in writing his history. The tradition that Confucius wrote any of the ten *I Appendices* has been questioned ever since the eleventh century of the Christian era. The verdict of higher criticism is that these Appendices belong to the second century B.C. after Taoist ideas had crept into the Confucian stream of thought in a manner unknown to us.

As to the *Ch'un Ch'iu*, the *Spring and Autumn Annals*, whether it was from the pen of Confucius himself, there is an old established tradition that it was. Mencius towards the end of the fourth century B.C., less than a hundred years after the passing of the master, wrote that "Confucius composed the *Spring and Autumn*" and alleged that the master said, "It is the *Spring and Autumn* which will make men know me." ‡ On Mencius'

† See section 457, leaf 6 in the Commentaries.

‡ *Works of Mencius*, Bk. III, Pt. 2, chap. 9, section 8.

authority we may accept that Confucius wrote a book entitled *Spring and Autumn*, but the question remains whether our book bearing that title was what Confucius had written. At least we may say that the book as it is does not tell much aside from the three commentaries, the *Tso Chuan*, the *Kung Yang Chuan* and the *Ku Liang Chuan*. From these commentaries one can learn much about a period of ancient Chinese history and political, moral, and religious ideas. §

For religious and moral ideas in China before Confucius and contemporary with him, that is, up to the beginning of the fifth century before the Christian era, we use as our primary sources the *Shih Ching*, the authentic portions of the *Shu Ching*,|| and the *Tso Chuan*.

§ See Bernhard Karlgren, *On the Authenticity and Nature of the Tso Chuan*, Göteborg 1926.

|| Tradition refers to two texts of the *Shu Ching*, the Modern Script text dictated by the scholar Fu Sheng of the time of Emperor Wen (179-157 B.C.) of the Former Han dynasty, and the Ancient Script text discovered by accident in an old house of Confucius which was pulled down by Prince Kung of Lu in the reign of Emperor Wu (140-86 B.C.). This, so the story goes, was deciphered by Kung An-kuo, one of Confucius' descendants. The reliability of this story has been questioned. In the second century A.D. the two texts were combined by the classical scholar Cheng K'ang-ch'eng (127-200 A.D.). Shortly after his time the Ancient Script text was lost, probably in the third century of the Christian era. A century later there was presented to the Emperor a copy of the *Shu Ching* asserted to be the original Ancient Script text, but its authenticity has been much questioned.

Critical scholarship accepts only 33 sections of the present *Shu Ching* as genuine. It was probably these sections that Confucius knew. The remaining 25 sections are of a much later date, probably forged in the fourth century A.D.

Questions have been raised recently by critical scholars in China regarding the genuineness of the first five sections. While the conclusions reached are not to be accepted as final, the points made ought to be further investigated.

Confucius' teachings are to be found in the *Analects*. Outside of this book we are on precarious grounds as to authenticity. To quote Confucius from the *I Appendices*, the *Great Learning*, the *Doctrine of the Mean*, the *Book of Rites*, or the *Family Sayings*, raises at once the question of dates. Even the last five sections of the *Analects* are to be used only with care. They show such a different style from that of the first fifteen that we are not sure that they belong to the same period. All Confucius' teachings existed first in oral tradition only. It is probable that the *Analects* was not committed to writing in any way approaching its present shape until the end of the fourth or the beginning of the third century before Christ. Mencius, in the fourth century or possibly in the early years of the third, did not refer to the book by name and hardly quoted from the text as we have it now, and we know him as a fervent follower of the Sage. There may have been at least two oral traditions in the state of Lu and in the state of Ch'i, both in modern Shantung, and later these were fused. The books known as the *I Appendices*, the *Great Learning*, the *Doctrine of the Mean*, and parts of the *Li Chi* may have embodied some of the oral traditions not preserved in the *Analects*, but the burden of proof is on those who may wish to entertain such a theory, which to our knowledge has never been developed. Confucius' authority has rather been taken for granted and in doing this too much is taken for granted. There is too much Taoist influence particularly in the *Chung Yung* or *Doctrine of*

*the Mean*, in the *I Appendices* and in the *Li Chi* or *Book of Rites* to assign them to a date as early as the *Analects* in its present form.

After this sketchy critical study of the dates of the Confucian classics, and space only permits a very brief sketch, we may turn to the Chinese religious and moral ideas, first in the pre-Confucian period and then in Confucius' own teachings.

### *Pre-Confucian Religious and Moral Ideas*

In the pre-Confucian period in China we find religion and morality mixed as is natural in any ancient culture. The belief in Shang-ti, the Supreme Ruler, was preeminent. He is the ruler of men in the lower world as in heaven, but more is said of him as ruler of this world. He is not only the source of all material blessings that may come to men, but is also the fountainhead of men's moral nature and social feelings. He hates no one. He is impartial and reigns over the lower world with absolute justice. Especially over the conduct of the rulers he keeps a constant and vigilant watch.¶

This just and impartial rule of Shang-ti develops into one of the fundamental religious and moral concepts of the Chinese. In later periods it takes the form of destiny and fate, supplemented still later by the Buddhist teaching of *Karma*. In the early days, however, it assumed only the naive form of retribution in this life. Here is a stanza from the *Book of Odes*:

¶ Cf. Legge, *Chinese Classics*, Vol. III, Pt. I. *Shu Ching*, Prolegomena, p. 193.

“My son, thus plainly have I told  
 What sages taught in days of old.  
 Give to my counsel reverent heed ;—  
 So shall you shun each guilty deed.  
 Lo ! Heaven in anger seems to threat  
 With utter overthrow our state.  
 Not from a distance, need we draw  
 The proofs of Heaven’s avenging law.  
 Great Heaven is far too wise to err.  
 If lower sink your character,  
 And virtue still the less you show,  
 Your people you will plunge in woe.” \*

The *Shih Ching* is full of such sentiments. The third part of the Classic from which we have just quoted reflects the life and mentality of the ruling class. If we look into the first part of the book we may get some glimpses of the life of the common folk. For them there was an established moral tradition to which they must conform, and to which they looked for guidance in their everyday life.

“Yes, ‘twas you the green who dyed,  
 You who fled the favorite’s pride.  
 Anger rises in my heart,  
 Pierces it as with a dart.  
 But on ancient rules lean I  
 Lest to wrong my thoughts should fly.” †

\* See also Legge, *op. cit.*, Vol. 4, Pt. 2. *Shih Ching*, Pt. III, Bk. III, Ode 2, section 12.  
 † *Ibid.* Pt. I, Bk. III, Ode 2, section 3.

These "ancient rules" dictated the line of action and even the minute details of conduct. This was and has been the concept of *li* which is sometimes rendered into English as "propriety". Life of propriety and life in society are synonymous with the Chinese. For them *li* is culture. A man who lives and acts according to *li* is a man of culture. *Li* is the distinguishing characteristic of man.

"Behold a rat! How small its limbs and fine!  
Then mark the course that scorns the proper line!  
Propriety's neglect may well provoke  
A wish the man would quickly court death's stroke." ‡

Respect for the past and for tradition was, however, common to all classes. The following quotation shows the attitude of those in authority:

"Oh me! the men who lead the state  
Forsake the wisdom of the past.  
Unruled by maxims wise and great,  
They veer with every fitful blast." §

The practice of ancestor worship, which had a very ancient origin with the Chinese as with other peoples of antiquity, helps to reinforce the grip of the past upon the present. As to the nature of the ceremony we would quote an outstanding sinologue who had the opportunity of observing it before modern influence came

‡ *Ibid.* Pt. I, Bk. IV, Ode 8, section 3.

§ *Ibid.* Pt. II, Bk. V, Ode 1, section 4.

to China on a large scale and as it had been in existence from the remote past. Thus says Dr. James Legge: "The description is as much that of a feast as of a sacrifice; and in fact those great seasonal occasions were what we might call grand family reunions, where the dead and the living met, eating and drinking together, where the living worshipped the dead, and the dead blessed the living." ||

The terms "worship" and "sacrifice" must be understood in their proper context. They have a moral and social, rather than a religious connotation, as the passage from "The Summary Account of Sacrifices" in the *Li Chi* bears out:

"The sacrifices of such men have their own blessing;—not indeed what the world calls blessing. Blessing here means perfection;—it is the name given to the complete and natural discharge of all duties, when nothing is left incomplete or improperly discharged. This is what we call perfection, implying the doing everything that should be done in one's internal self, and externally the performance of everything according to proper method."

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"It is by sacrifice that the nourishment of parents is followed up and filial duty to them perpetrated.—Therefore in three ways is a filial son's service of his parents shown:—while they are alive by nour-

|| Legge, *op. cit.* Vol. 4, Pt. 1, Prolegomena, p. 135.

ishing them; when they are dead, by all rites of mourning; and when the mourning is over by sacrificing to them. In his nourishing them we see his natural obedience; in his funeral rites we see his sorrow; in his sacrifices we see his reverence and observance of the proper seasons." ¶

From the first part of the *Shih Ching* we learn also that the Chinese in those early days, as they have ever since, regarded filial piety as an important virtue. The first thought of a man forlorn and far from home would be his parents and their support. Read such an ode as *Shih Ching*, Part I, Book X, Ode 8, stanza 1.

The love of home was as characteristic of the Chinese then as it is now. Ode 4 in Part I of Book IX of the *Shih Ching* shows how the thought of a man from home went back to his parents and brothers. Joy of home is the greatest blessing in life and almost the sole source of comfort and gratification when society is simpler and life nearer to nature.

"Children and wife we love;  
 Union with them is sweet  
 As lute's soft strains that soothe our pains.  
 How joyous do we meet!  
 Brothers more than they  
 Can satisfy the heart.  
 'Tis their accord does peace afford  
 And lasting joy impart.

“For ordering of your homes  
 For joy with child and wife,  
 Consider well the truth I tell  
 This is the charm of life.” \*

This ode is interesting, for it shows how much importance was attached to blood kinship.

Friends come in, too, to complete the categories of human relationships:

“The bird although a creature small,  
 Upon its mates depends;  
 And shall we men, who rank o'er all,  
 Not seek to have our friends?” †

This is pre-Confucian Chinese society, simple, unsophisticated. Moral teachings had not been fully developed, but traits characteristic of the present day Chinese were there quite discernible. They were industrious, as depicted in Ode 1 of Book XV, Pt. I, which mentions in detail the routine life all the year round. They were hard-working, cheerful, serene, never lacking a sense of humor.

“Push not the cart you stand behind;—  
 The dust will but becloud your eyes.  
 Heed not the troubles of your mind;—  
 'Twill weight you as you seek to rise.” ‡

\* Legge, *op. cit.* Vol. 4, Pt. 2, pp. 252-53. *Shih Ching*, Pt. II, Bk. I, Ode 4, sections 7 and 8.

† *Ibid.* pp. 253-54. *Shih Ching*, Pt. II, Bk. I, Ode 5, section 1.

‡ *Ibid.* p. 362. *Shih Ching*, Pt. II, Bk. VI, Ode 2, section 3.

The status of women then, as it has been until recent years, was evidently low. Much complaint is often heard through the odes from women unhappily married. Theoretically the wife was her husband's equal, but actually, on account of the practice of polygamy, her position though honored and dignified as the mistress in the household, whether that of the king or of the peasant, often became only nominal. Ancestor worship and recognition of descent through the male line alone were largely responsible for this. Sons were to be preferred to daughters. "Sons . . . on couches lulled to rest, . . . enrobed, with sceptres play; . . . their knees the vermeil covers shall display . . . And daughters . . . shall be placed upon the ground to sleep, their playthings tiles, their dress the simplest worn." §

The *Shu-Ching* or *Book of History* gives more material for the reconstruction of anything approaching an ethico-political system of pre-Confucian China. Again space does not permit a detailed study. Let us take the *Fourth Book of Shang* entitled *The Grand Plan*. It is in the modified Ancient Script text now extant, and, according to the best authorities, it was also a part of the Modern Script text.

The *Shu Ching* is a difficult book to read and more so to interpret. The section we have chosen to represent the book is one of the most perplexing portions. If we should put aside the traditional commentaries and expositions,

§ *Ibid.*, pp. 306-307. *Shih Ching*, Pt. II, Bk. IV, Ode 5, sections 8 and 9.

we may discern in it a picture of the pre-Confucian Chinese outlook on life.

The teaching embodied in this document must have been of ancient origin even at the time it was committed to writing, presumably in the early years of the Chou dynasty in the eleventh century before the Christian era. Traditions had already gathered around it and given it a feeling of divine origin. It is one of the few places in the Confucian classics where there is even an intimation of revealed truth. Much of it seems obscure, but viewed in the light of its historical background it contains nothing esoteric or mysterious.

The *Grand Plan* was a plan for the government and it included in it nine Divisions, given as follows in the order of the text and in terms largely those of Legge's translation :

I. The Five Elements—

1. Water
2. Fire
3. Wood
4. Metal
5. Earth

II. The Five Businesses—

1. Demeanor
2. Speech
3. Seeing
4. Hearing
5. Thinking

## III. The Eight Departments of Government—

1. Food
2. Commodities
3. Sacrifices
4. Public Works
5. Public Instruction
6. Administration of Law
7. Inter-state Intercourse
8. Army

## IV. The Five Arrangements—

1. Year
2. Month
3. Day
4. Stars and Planets and Zodiaceal Signs
5. Calendar Calculation

## V. The Royal Perfection—

## VI. The Three Virtues—

1. Correctness and straight-forwardness
2. Strong government
3. Mild government

## VII. Divination—

## VIII. Verification—

## IX. The Five Blessings and the Six Adversities—

## Five Blessings—

1. Long Life
2. Riches
3. Health of Body and Mind
4. Love of Virtue
5. A Crowning End to Life

### Six Adversities—

1. Misfortune shortening the life
2. Sickness
3. Sorrow
4. Poverty
5. Wickedness
6. Weakness

This is simply the scheme of political principles around the central idea that the object of government should be the securing of the essentials of public welfare through the moral example and influence of the ruler. Success and failure would be indicated by Heaven through signs in physical phenomena, and in case of doubt divine guidance is to be sought by divination. Thus, "Royal Perfection", "the Five Businesses" and "the Three Virtues" have references to the kind of government desired and the means of securing it. "The Five Elements" represent the necessities of everyday life, "the Five Arrangements" are essential to agricultural pursuits, and "the Eight Departments of Government" are really what the government should consist of in getting its business done. Divination to gauge the will of Heaven, and signs and portents by which to verify its interpretation, would serve as sufficient guide to the ruler. "The Five Blessings" are rewards and "the Six Adversities" are punishments from Heaven. In a word, the *Grand Plan* sums up beautifully the moral and political tradition of the Chinese before Confucius. The

whole book of the *Shu Ching* is in substance an elaboration of the scheme just analyzed.

### *The Teaching of Confucius*

This moral and political tradition Confucius inherited from the past. He was an ardent admirer of it and his whole life was assiduously devoted to the endeavor of realizing it or, in his own conception, reviving it in his time.

But he failed because he was given no opportunity. He had the power but not the authority. At least this has been the verdict of posterity. He had the virtue but not the throne, as it is stated in the *Doctrine of the Mean*. || He turned his attention to education by gathering around himself his disciples for intensive training. He stamped upon them his ideas and his spirit more perhaps through his life than by his teaching. After his death when they were scattered all over the states, they carried his teaching throughout the country. In this way the Confucian School came into existence.

But what were his teachings? We can give only a bare outline here, and for reasons already stated we have drawn our material entirely from the *Analects*.

The classical term *Shang-ti*, meaning Supreme Ruler, is not found in the *Analects*. But Confucius was not an agnostic. Religion was not his main interest, and he refused to speculate about the unseen. Yet he performed

|| See *Doctrine of the Mean*, chap. 28. An English translation of the *Doctrine of the Mean* is available in *The Four Books*, translated by James Legge. Shanghai, n.d.

punctilioiusly his religious duties and attached due importance to such performances. He often used the term "Heaven", but apparently in two different senses. There were occasions when "Heaven" must have had a religious meaning to him, similar to, though not so anthropomorphic as, the classical Shang-ti. But as we read the *Analects* there seems to be the tendency to regard Heaven as destiny which is the development of the classical notion of the strict justice and impartiality of Shang-ti, and which in later periods after Confucius becomes Nature or the natural course of things.

The state for Confucius is a system of human relationships. This he has inherited from the Classics as brought out in the *Grand Plan* with Nine Divisions.¶ To govern the empire is the same thing as to govern the family. This principle has been developed in a later period in the *Ta Hsüeh*, the book of the *Great Learning*, which together with the *Analects*, the *Doctrine of the Mean*, and the *Works of Mencius*, has formed the *Four Books*. The empire, as the family, is to be governed by personal influence and moral example. In the social relations there is a sufficient foundation for government if those relations are maintained and developed according to their relative significance. This being done, nothing else would be necessary. "He who exercises government by means of his virtue may be compared to the north polar star, which keeps its place and all the stars turn toward it," said Confucius. \* He refers briefly to de-

¶ See *infra*, pp. 54-56.

\* *Analects*, Book II, chap. 1.

tails of government administration, altogether too briefly. Hence, he has been criticized for his over-simplification of political problems, but he lived in a simple society and he had in mind a social and political system handed down from the past and recorded in the Classics, particularly in the *Li* which later became lost. By *li* is meant not only the sacrificial, court and social ceremonials and the rules of personal conduct, but also the social and political institutions. † It was the revival of these institutions that would constitute the external side of a benevolent government to Confucius. In his times these institutions were still existing in name. This was the reason why he believed the first step in political reform would be "to rectify names".‡

His moral teachings are centered around the basic concept of *jen*. This term has been variously rendered in English. *Benevolence* is the usual translation, but an unsatisfactory one. Confucius says, to be sure, that *jen* is to love man. § But it is far more than this. He would not easily attribute this virtue of *jen* to people. He denied it to many who were reputed to possess it. || He did not dare to claim it himself.|| What, then, is *jen*? It is the virtue of man, using the term "virtue" in the

† *Analects*, Book II, chapters 5, 23; Book III, chapters 3, 4, 9, 15, 17, 19, 22, 26; Book I, chapter 12; Book VIII, chapter 8; Book XII, chapter 1; Book IX, chapter 3.

‡ *Analects*, Book XIII, chap. 3.

§ *Analects*, Book XII, chap. 22.

|| Cf. *Analects*, Book V, chap. 19; Book VI, chap. 5; Book XIV, chap. 2; Book XVIII, chap. 1.

¶ *Analects*, Book VII, chap. 33.

sense in which Plato and Aristotle used it. We suggest the translation, "the virtue of perfect humanity".

This concept of *jen* is really the starting point of moral philosophy in the Confucian school in later ages. The underlying idea is that the purpose of man is to be man indeed. Man's ideal is to be as human as possible. And humanity consists in human relationships, for etymologically *jen* is the virtue of a man in his relation to another man. The Chinese character *jen* consists of two parts, which mean respectively "two" and "man". It is interesting to note that the same character comes to mean afterwards "a seed of any fruit tree", and then, "the function of any part of the living body." In other words, *jen* is the germ of life; it is life itself.

A Japanese scholar of Confucianism sums up the teaching of Confucius in these words: "He devotes himself to the realization of a religion of ethics, the consecration of Man to Man. To him, Humanity is God, the harmony of life his ultimate. Leaving the Indian soul to soar and mingle with its own infinitude of the sky; leaving empiric Europe to investigate the secrets of Earth and matter, and Christians and Semites to be wafted in mid-air through a Paradise of terrestrial dreams—leaving all these, Confucianism must always continue to hold great minds by the spell of its broad intellectual generalizations, and its infinite compassion for the common people." \*

These are the words of an enthusiast, a fanatic, not

\*Kakuzo Okakura, *The Ideals of the East*, New York, 1905, p. 27.

with a little exaggeration. The emphasis on the human side of life is indeed both the strength and weakness of Confucius' teaching.

### *Confucius' Rivals*

While Confucius was helping to crystallize and standardize the traditional teachings of his race in morals and politics, particularly through the school he had brought into existence, other schools of thought rose at the same time to contest the field. They all appeared in this period of about three hundred years from the latter part of the sixth century B.C. to the establishment of the Ch'in Dynasty towards the end of the third century B.C. This is known as the Ante-Ch'in period, certainly one of the most prolific periods in the history of Chinese thought. For our purpose it is not necessary to deal with the minor schools. We can review only briefly the school of Mo Ti, the Jurist school, and the Taoists.

According to recent research Mo Ti lived during the period of 479-381 B.C. He was born at about the time of Confucius' death.† Very probably he was for a time in contact with the Confucian school, for he seemed to have intimate knowledge of its ideas, some of which he criticized severely. Tradition has it that he came from the state of Sung in modern Honan.

Mo Ti like Confucius appealed to the ancient sages

† According to Professor Chien Muh's study of Mo Ti. Commercial Press, Shanghai.

for the authority of his social and political ideas, although he was not so conservative as the older teacher. He harked back, however, to the traditions of the Hsia and the Shang dynasties rather than to the Chou. He represented an older culture in that section of the country where the descendants of the Shang were allowed to stay when the Chou dynasty was established. Instead of King Wên and King Wu of the Chou he would have the great Yü, the reputed founder of the Hsia dynasty, as the model king. Following the tradition of Yü he advocated frugality even at the expense of rites and ceremonies which Confucius cherished. He considered music an economic waste, quite contrary to the Confucian teaching. He was against aggressive war although he would justify national defence. He is known for his teaching of universal love. He argued that this is the logical inference from the will of Heaven. Universal love, he maintained, is the surest means to avoid conflict between individuals and between states. It is a doctrine based on utilitarianism. Only when the logic of utility fails, is religious sanction resorted to.

When Mencius was at the height of his reputation towards the end of the fourth century B.C. the influence of Mo Ti had spread so far northward that Mencius would say, "the words of Yang Chu and Mo Ti fill the empire." This continued long after Mencius' time. Mo Ti's influence was still flourishing when Han Fei wrote during the second half of the third century B.C. It seemed to be the only rival that Confucianism had at

the time. But, strange to say, when Ssu-ma Ch'ien, the historian, wrote his historical records about the beginning of the first century B.C., it had become extinct.

It became extinct because its severe attack on the military policies of the Warring States must have counted against it, and its doctrine of universal love or rather in Mencius' words, "love without difference of degree" failed to catch the imagination of the Chinese, whose social structure and moral teachings were based on personal relationships and not on "the *impersonal element* of ultimate truth". Furthermore, the Chou culture, the culture which Confucius and his school sought to perpetuate had so permeated Chinese society that another cultural tradition had very little chance.

### *The Jurists and Statecraft*

The Jurists had their stronghold in the state of Ch'in in northwestern China. They were practical politicians and cared little for philosophy. Their aim was the establishment and maintenance of an efficient government.

Unlike the followers of Confucius and of Mo Ti they would *not* go back to the past for the authority of their policies, nor would they appeal to the ancient sages. It was the opinion of Lord Shang, the Jurist, that those who govern the world do not necessarily hold the same principles, and those who benefit the kingdom do not necessarily initiate the past.‡ The best policy is that

‡ Cf. J. J. L. Duyvendak, *The Book of Lord Shang*, London, 1928, p. 172.

which takes into consideration the circumstances and needs of the time.

The first step in the political program is the building up of the economic strength of the people. To this end productive industries, especially agriculture, are to be promoted. With the increase of a food supply there will be an increase of population, and with a large population there is more manpower. The next essential is an objective system of law independent of the personal caprice of the sovereign. "Laws should be published in the government offices, and this done, there ought to be a definite idea of what the penalty is in the minds of the people." § The sovereign must maintain his dignity and inspire awe in his ministers. The Jurists in China anticipated Machiavelli's *Prince* by two thousand years.

The state of Ch'in adopted the policy of the Jurists and built up a strong power which finally eliminated the Warring States and unified China. Ch'in Shih Huang Ti, or the first emperor of the Ch'in Dynasty, was a splendid exemplar of the spirit of the Jurists. He was successful as a statesman. But his yoke was too heavy for the Chinese people. Shortly after his death, his dynasty came to an end. His government was so much hated that the rebelling peasants were able to defeat his strong army with their farming implements. The Jurists had the bad fortune of being odiously associated with his memory, so much so that no one would dare again to advocate their teachings. The ancient Chinese ab-

§ Quoted from *Shên Pu-hai* who died in 337 B.C.

horred the blood-thirsty god of impersonal legislation. They preferred rulers who exerted their authority through moral influence.

### *Taoism as Philosophy and the Early Taoists*

The origin of Taoism as a philosophy and the dates of the early Taoists, Lao-tzu, Chuang-tzu and Lieh-tzu, have caused so much controversy among students of Chinese philosophy that our feeling is that when we deal with these questions we touch a territory where "fools rush in where angels fear to tread". For our present purpose, suffice it to say that the Taoist ideas were definitely known to Chinese literature as early as the third century B.C. while the term Taoism as a philosophy was not used until the Han dynasty in the second century B.C. When Ssu-ma T'an and his son, Ssu-ma Ch'ien, wrote the historical records towards the end of the second and at the beginning of the first century B.C., the story of Lao-tzu, the reputed first Taoist teacher, was couched in the most obscure language, because so little of certainty was known about him. It is our opinion (for reasons which space does not permit elaboration here), that the Taoist teachings did not originally represent the Chinese culture, by which we mean the culture of China before the latter part of the second century B.C., with its origins in the middle and lower Yellow River valley, and which we have designated the Confucian culture. From the third century B.C. on, Taoism entered into the stream of Chinese

thought and exerted an important influence upon it and was partly absorbed by it.

All that we know about Lao-tzu is in the *Tao Tê Ching*, a book consisting of only about 5,000 words, one of the great and most charming little books the world has ever produced. It is full of moral maxims in terse language. Many of these have gone into currency in Chinese society and Chinese literature. "The place of what is firm and strong is below and that of what is soft and weak is above", "with gentleness I can be bold; with economy I can be liberal", "He who overcomes men has force; he who overcomes himself is strong." These are only specimens taken at random. The book richly repays reading.

The general theme of the *Tao Tê Ching* is *tao*, a very metaphysical concept. It has been tersely stated for the English reader by Dr. P. J. Maclagan in these words: "*Tao* is that by which all things come to fulfil the law of their being; and . . . of what *tao* is in itself nothing can be said. Putting those two statements together we may deduce this definition: *Tao* is unqualified Being, plus productive spontaneity." || According to the *Tao Tê Ching* the world as a manifestation of *tao* is a series of natural and spontaneous events. It is the best possible world, including man in it. Any attempt to improve upon it will only make things worse. We must not tamper with something that refuses to be tampered with. Human civilization is man-made and is the product of tampering with nature. It is, therefore, the main

|| P. J. Maclagan, *Chinese Religious Ideas*, London, 1926, p. 74.

cause of human misery and social disorder. Hence, Lao-tzu urges us to return to nature by abandoning all human conventions and artificial devices. Non-action, non-interference, letting nature and spontaneity run its own course, is the only and surest way of good government as well as good living. It is conformity to nature.

Hence, the ideal society is "in a little state with a small population . . . though there were the individuals with the abilities of ten or a hundred men, there should be no employment of them; . . . though they had boats and carriages, they should have no occasion to ride in them. . . . There should be a neighboring state within sight and the voices of the fowls and dogs should be heard all the way from it to us, but I would make the people to old age, even to death, not have any intercourse with it." ¶

The same ideas are in Chuang-tzu, but he would go further. Lao-tzu still thinks of improving society and life by conformity to nature. Chuang-tzu does not believe it worthwhile to do that. According to him, "the pure men of old slept without dreams and waked without anxiety. They ate without discrimination, breathing deep breaths . . . The pure men of old did not know what it was to love life or to hate death."\* When all social institutions are ignored and all human differences forgotten, man will become one with the cosmos. "Such

¶ *Sacred Books of the East* edited by F. Max Müller, Vol. 39, p. 122.

\* *Chuang Tzu: Mystic, Moralist and Social Reformer*, translated from the Chinese by H. A. Giles. 2d ed., rev., London, 1926, pp. 69-70.

a man will bury gold in the hillside and cast pearls into the sea. He will not struggle for wealth, nor strive for fame. He will not rejoice at old age, nor grieve over early death . . . His glory is to know that all things are ONE, and that life and death are but phases of the same existence."†

This would be good philosophy for a few care-worn individuals, but it did not attract the bulk of the Chinese who have a practical bent of mind. It was too anti-social, and the Chinese have always been the most social beings. They would never surrender their social structure, give up their social relationships, abandon their culture. Therefore, it was not due to court intrigue nor was it a mere accident that Confucianism was declared to be the state dogma by imperial decree in the year 135 B.C. By that time all the rivals of the Confucian school except Taoism had disappeared and Taoism as a social and political philosophy did not have the characteristics to win the hearts of the Chinese; on the other hand, Confucianism was so Chinese in every way, conservative, always playing safe, taking the middle path, embodying in its teachings the past experience of the nation and conserving in its institutions the social values already worked out and well tested, that it won the day against all its rivals and absorbed into its system some of their teachings.

† *Ibid.* p. 137.

## 3

THE DEVELOPMENT OF CONFUCIAN  
MORAL PHILOSOPHY*The Early Han Confucianism*

THE Confucianism established by imperial decree as the state dogma in the year 135 B.C. by the Han Emperor Wu Ti was not the Confucian teaching of the days of Confucius. No matter how faithful the *Analects* may have been as the records of the teaching of the master, its date was some two hundred years after the death of Confucius, and in its oral traditions, which were in more than one form as we have seen, there must have been considerable development. This is evident from the fact that the book records not only the sayings of Confucius but also those of his immediate disciples, and these disciples are referred to as masters, for traditions had already gathered around their respective names.

After the death of Confucius his disciples were scattered. Tradition has it that each of them developed a school by emphasizing some particular aspect of the master's teaching. Han Fei, who wrote during the second half of the third century B.C., spoke of "the eight divisions of the Confucian school". We are unable now from the historical material available to identify all the eight divisions. Two of them, however, stand out quite

distinctly. One of these seems to be the followers of Tsêng Ch'an. Tsêng Ch'an was the disciple to whom Confucius said one day, "My doctrine is that of an all-pervading unity". The other disciples could not understand this and when the master had gone out, Tsêng Ch'an explained by saying that it was nothing but the doctrine of being "true to the principles of our nature and the benevolent exercise of them to others."† To Tsêng Ch'an and his followers the substance of Confucius' teaching was the cultivation of our moral nature. After Tsêng Ch'an came his disciple and Confucius' grandson Tzu-ssu, and after Tzu-ssu was Mencius. It is difficult to be dogmatic as to the writings left by Tsêng Ch'an and Tzu-ssu. We have sufficient reason to refuse the acceptance of the *Ta Hsüeh* or the *Great Learning* and the *Classic of Filial Piety* as from the pen of Tsêng Ch'an himself, or *Chung Yung*, the *Doctrine of the Mean*, as written by Tzu-ssu. We may, however, accept these books as representing the teachings of the school of Tsêng Ch'an. These teachings find their expression in the works of Mencius, which we believe to be writings by Mencius himself with later additions by his disciples.

The other division of the Confucian school is that of Tzu-hsia and Tzu-yu, two of Confucius' immediate disciples also. Although Tzu-yu criticized Tzu-hsia for being too much absorbed with minute details and unable to see

† *Analects*, Book IV, chap. 15.

the woods for the trees, so to speak,§ they agreed in emphasizing the teaching of *li* which gave rise to the ideas of Hsün-tzu || and the *Li Chi* or *Book of Rites*.

The *I Ching* or the *Book of Changes* escaped damage through the period when Confucianism was under persecution by the first emperor of Ch'in, for the simple reason that it was regarded as late as that time as a book on divination. For some unknown reason, however, it was raised to the rank of a classic in the latter part of the third century B.C. and our critical study leads us to the conclusion that it was at this time, too, that the *I Appendices*, i.e., those portions of the *I Ching* as we have it now embodying all the philosophical ideas, came to be composed.

When Confucianism was established as the state dogma under Wu Ti, in the latter part of the second century B.C., it was Confucianism as embodied in the *Shih Ching* or *Book of Odes*, the *Shu Ching* or *Book of History*, the *I Ching* or *Book of Changes* with the *Appendices*, the *Ch'un Ch'iu* or *Spring and Autumn Annals*, the *Li Books*, the *Analects*, the *Works of Mencius*, the *Works of Hsün-tzu*, and the *Classic of Filial Piety*. We are not sure that the *Works of Hsün-tzu* should be included in the list. Hsün-tzu did not figure

§ See *Analects*, Book XIX, chap. 12. Note that the authenticity of this portion of the *Analects* from Bk. XVI to the end has been questioned by critical scholarship. However, it represents an old tradition.

|| Cf. H. H. Dubs, *Hsün-tzu*, London, 1927. Hsün-tzu's dates are uncertain, approximately 320-235 B. C.

prominently in the early Han period, although his ideas were being perpetuated in parts of the *Li Chi*, which was taking final shape just at that time, and which includes the *Ta Hsüeh* and the *Chung Yung*. In other words, Confucianism of the Earlier Han dynasty was Confucianism in what we call now the Five Classics and the Four Books of the Confucian School.

It is to be noted that Confucianism as developed in the period of early Han had absorbed considerable Taoist thinking. Mencius' teaching in the latter part of the fourth century and the beginning of the third century B.C. was quite intolerant of any idea contrary to the Confucian tradition. For him the Confucian culture was the only culture conceivable. But when the *Chung Yung* or *Doctrine of the Mean* came to be written at the end of the third or the beginning of the second century B.C., almost exactly one hundred years after Mencius, the existence of a culture other than that of the Confucian tradition was recognized by the Confucian scholars. The *Chung Yung* in its present form is a composite book with at least two documents combined in it, both of about the same date, although there are indications that the first nineteen chapters were earlier. If Chapter 16 should be shifted to follow the present Chapter 23, we would find the idea of *the mean* only in the earlier document and the doctrine of *ch'eng* in the later one. What concerns us at the moment is Chapter 10. There we find a culture of "forbearance and gentleness" in the South contrasted on the same footing with a cul-

ture of "lying under arms and meeting death without regret" in the North. This was the unfeigned recognition by the Confucian culture of not only the existence but also the position of the culture in the South, which as we take it was the culture giving rise to the Taoist philosophy as represented in the *Tao Tê Ching*. We have already observed that the two cultures first came into contact in Mencius' time. It had taken fully a hundred years for the southern culture to receive its recognition from the Confucian scholars. The contribution of the Taoist philosophy to the Confucian tradition was a metaphysical basis for the Confucian matter-of-fact moral teachings. This must be made plain.

### *The Basic Concepts of Confucian Moral Philosophy as Developed in Subsequent Ages*

We have tried to make clear in a previous chapter that the center of Confucius' teaching is the concept of *jen*, which we would translate as the Virtue of Perfect Humanity. To be a man indeed is to be perfectly human. But how can a man be good, be perfectly human, when he lives in an immoral society? He can cultivate his moral nature and keep it only when he maintains an attitude appropriate to every given moral situation, and that is the idea of *I*, which is generally translated by the English term "righteousness". This is a misleading translation, especially when it is coupled with the co-ordinate virtue benevolence, the usual English rendering for *jen*. But *I* is only the expression of *jen* in a

given moral situation, in the contact of one person with another person. Thus, when a man is dealing with his parent, his proper attitude as a man of moral cultivation, as a man with his humanity developed in him, is that of being obedient and dutiful. That is *hsiao* or filial piety. His attitude towards his own child, however, is that of being tender; that towards his wife in the home is being able to give her the proper leadership; that towards an elder brother, respectfulness; that towards a superior in an official position, loyalty; and that towards a friend, faithfulness. The Confucian morality is based on the five personal relationships. As there are two parties to each relation, there are naturally ten kinds of moral attitudes, the ten *I* as taught in the Three-Character Classic, the primer which every child had to read when he went to school before the old educational system was abolished in 1905. The cultivation of his human virtue so as to enable him to express his appropriate attitude in every given moral situation will make him a good man, as good as any man can be, and give him the good life which, when extended to the larger and larger social groups of which he becomes a member as his relationships expand into concentric circles, will mean his family is regulated, his state well governed, and the whole empire tranquil and happy. This is the general theme of the *Ta Hsüeh* or the *Great Learning*.

*I*, therefore, is really *jen* functioning. The one depends upon the other and issues from it. *Jen* refers

to the character of the man, while *I* expresses his attitude towards, or reaction to, a given situation of moral significance. It is a generic term, under which may be placed many specific virtues. The proper attitude of one man towards another is "to extend the same consideration to him as we have of ourselves," as a Sung philosopher, Ch'eng I-ch'uan, puts it.|| This is the virtue of *shu*, which is what Confucius said, "Do not do to others what you do not want done to yourself."\* And it is not merely a negative maxim, because the positive side is clearly stated in the *Chung Yung* where Confucius is reported to have said, "To set the example in behaving to a friend, as I would require him to behave to me."† The best translation for the term *shu* is "reciprocity". It is Kant's maxim, "so act as to treat humanity, whether in thine own person or in that of any other, in every case as an end withal, never as a means only."‡ But we must not stretch the parallel too far. Suffice it to say that in general a man's attitude to another man is *shu* as just explained, and one's proper attitude to one's self is *chung*, which means, "faithfulness to one's own nature."§ Ch'eng I-ch'uan explains it as "so to develop one's self as to leave no room for regret."|| It refers, however, not just to the cultivation of one's inner na-

\* *Symposium of Sung Philosophy* (in Chinese, issued 1415), XXXVII, 26.

† *Analects*, Book XV, chap. 23.

‡ *Doctrine of the Mean*, chap. XIII, section 4.

§ *Kant's Critique of Practical Reason and Other Works*, trans. by T. K. Abbott, London, 1889, p. 47.

|| *Cf. Analects*, Book IV, chap. 15.

|| *Symposium of Sung Philosophy* (issued 1415), XXXVII, 18.

ture. It refers to the self in any given moral situation. Whatever the circumstances may be, a man must be true to himself, to the humanity that is in him, loyal to his human nature. Both *chung* and *shu* are species of *I*, the one with regard to others, and the other to one's self.

But according to the Confucian conception, the self always has a social significance. Man is and must be related to his fellow-men and to society before he can be a man. He is born into a network of social relations. The end of self-cultivation is to get the family regulated, the state well governed and to give tranquillity and peace to the whole world,|| which is an obligation not to be shunned.\*

It is to be noted that the Confucian conception of the individual as inseparable from society is essentially in terms of duties rather than in terms of rights. There is no teaching in the Classics referring to human rights of the individual as such. Even the right to rebellion against a tyrant, as stated by Mencius, is a duty to rid the state or the empire of a corrupt government with its divine mandate to rule already removed. Confucian moral philosophy regards man not as an isolated individual born with only his capacities to develop and his own interests to pursue; he is always regarded as a member of a community born in the midst of various social relations with sacred duties to fulfil. The question of the Chinese moral philosopher is not merely the relation of

|| *Great Learning*, the text section; and *Analects*, Book XIV, chap. 45.

\* *Analects*, Book XVIII, chap. 7.

one man to another, abstractly conceived, but rather that of a man to his parent, his wife, his child, his brother, his friend, his superior or his subordinate. It is a one-many relation.

This is why in the Confucian background the teaching of the Mo Ti school that every man should love every other man regardless of social relations could not arouse enthusiasm for any great length of time. Mo Ti thinks of man and society in the abstract as if that alone matters, while the Confucian Chinese wishes to treat a man in his concrete relations with various feelings and obligations towards different members of the community. As Hsün-tzu, the Confucian thinker, criticizes Mo Ti, "he has insight about what is universal in man, but not about the individual as a concrete being," in other words, about man in the abstract, not as a man with feelings and emotions. Thus, while Confucius and his school do teach about "love for all",† they feel, nevertheless, that the mental constitution of man requires him to express his affections to those people related to him in a more or less limited circle; that each social relationship involves a certain claim on the man. Life consists in responses to these claims. The attitude required by the response to such a claim is what the Confucian moral concept *I* means.

How is the appropriate attitude *I* as a function of the man's character *jen* to be carried into action? *I* represents what ought to be done in a given situation.

† *Analects*, Book I, chap. 6

By what procedure may *I* be made effective? The answer is to be found in the concept *li*, a term generally translated as propriety in English.

*Li* is sometimes taken by sinologues to mean politeness or courtesy, and sometimes ritual or ceremony. A casual reading of the *Analects* will reveal the multitudinous usages of the term. In all the various meanings we find the underlying idea that one's feelings are to be expressed only in such ways as have been established by long usage and sanctioned by public recognition. There is a recognized mode of giving outlet to one's feelings which has proved to be profitable to the community and wholesome to the individual. This is *li*. It is the proper procedure of action. Hsün-tzu believes that when *li* reaches its perfection, it will express men's emotions and sense of beauty to the fullest extent and produce joy and happiness as its legitimate result. To this end it is necessary to secure for *li* that harmony and proportion which alone will satisfy the emotions not merely as they arise severally, but as they represent the nature of man as a whole.‡ Here is a problem for the student of mental hygiene who may have something to learn from ancient Confucian moral philosophy and practice.

There are definite traces of the influence of the teachings of Hsün-tzu in the *Li Chi* or *Book of Rites*. This is to be expected, for there is a direct lineage from Hsün-tzu to the reputed author or at least editor of the

‡ Cf. *Works of Hsün-tzu*, trans. by H. H. Dubs, London, 1928, p. 223.

*Li Chi*. But the main emphasis of the *Li Chi* is on *li* as a means to prevent licentious expressions of human emotions.

In this connection, one should point out that Mencius is in error when he makes mere knowledge or understanding of *li* to be a virtue comparable to the concept of moral insight or wisdom in Greek ethics, and to the concept *chi* in Chinese. Properly understood, the four virtues are coordinate; one is derived from the other. So *chi* or moral insight must be built into man's character before it can become effective in action. Mere intellectual comprehension is not enough. *Li* calls for true courage. The *Doctrine of the Mean* gives courage alongside of knowledge and humanity as the "three virtues universally binding." §

But courage is only a derived excellence. The man of culture with his human nature fully developed in him will have an appropriate attitude towards his fellow-being standing in a definite social relation to him in a given moral situation. A man of *jen* will have the necessary *I* when he finds himself in a given set of circumstances. He will have the courage to express that attitude in the recognized mode of action which is *li*, and education is not only to induce the cultivation of this inner nature but also to inculcate the necessary knowledge of the proper action, which knowledge is *chi*. By constant practice it becomes a part of his character. Hence, to the four virtues, *jen*, *I*, *li*, *chi*, one derived

§ *Doctrine of the Mean*, chap. XX, section 8.

from the other, not four standing side by side separately, the Han Confucian teacher Tung Chung-shu in the second century B.C. adds a fifth, *hsin*, constancy, to make the five virtues. There are, therefore, five virtues in Confucian ethics just as there are five elements, five tastes, five sounds, and even five directions, namely, east, west, north, south, and central, for without the center there can be no cardinal points!

The Sung philosophers go into elaborate schemes of the correlation of these five virtues. The most fantastic is that of Chu Hsi (1129-1200 A.D.). He attempts to establish a relation of the five virtues with the five cosmological elements—water, fire, wood, metal, and earth, on the one hand—and on the other with the seasons of the year. There are only four seasons, of course, and he fails to find the fifth, but he seeks to overcome this difficulty by saying that earth is immanent in the other four elements just as *hsin* or constancy is essential to all virtues.|| So also says another Sung writer, Ch'eng I-ch'u'an: “*Jen* carries with it all the other four virtues; for what is right to do is *I*, how to do it is *li*, knowledge of all this is *chi*, and persistence in practice is *hsin*.”||

### *The Metaphysical Basis of Confucian Moral Philosophy*

All this is just moral cultivation. It takes for granted that man is capable of it. But is he? Confucius hardly

|| Cf. J. Percy Bruce, *Chu Hsi and His Masters*, London, 1923, pp. 171-183.

|| *Symposium of Sung Philosophy* (issued 1415), XXXVII, 1.

touched this question. He merely assumed that when man became most human his best would be manifested. This implies the goodness of human nature and it is in the development of this idea that Mencius, in the fourth century B.C., made his greatest contribution to Chinese moral philosophy.

What did Mencius mean when he taught that man is good by nature? Did he mean that man's nature is intrinsically good? He has been grossly misinterpreted by his followers and misunderstood by his critics, and his worst critic was his junior contemporary Hsün-tzu. Hsün-tzu in his works has an essay bearing the title, "Human Nature is Evil". His whole argument is against Mencius' doctrine of the goodness of human nature, but he seems to have failed completely to grasp the meaning and purport of Mencius' teaching. What Mencius means by the goodness of man's nature is that man by nature is social, fit for social living. All his social virtues are potential in him in the sense that they will develop in response to proper environment and stimulus. No less than Hsün-tzu, Mencius is emphatic that virtues are the fruits of discipline and cultivation. "Seek and you will find them; neglect and you will lose them." \* But unless it is in the nature of man to be good, Mencius would argue, no amount of moral cultivation will ever make him good. He admits that men are different in their moral attainment; for on account of differences in external circumstances, they do not develop their moral na-

\* *Works of Mencius*, Book VI, Pt. 1, chap. 6.

ture to its full capacity. Hsün-tzu seems to have failed to understand this. It was possible that he never came into personal contact with Mencius. At least the sixth and seventh books of Mencius' *Works* do not seem to have been known to him. As to his own teaching on the evil of human nature, his fallacies are many. In the first place, he dwells on the egoistic side of man's nature to the entire neglect of his social side. Secondly, he is dogmatic in regarding social institutions as superimposed upon man and not as results of man's efforts to meet his social requirements. Thirdly, his definition of nature takes no consideration of the possibility of development. Man's nature is good only if man is born good, with all his virtues full-bloom. All that Mencius means by the goodness of human nature is that man's nature intends him for social living with all the social relationships.

But yet another question arises: How can it be shown that man is intended for such social living, to live peacefully and harmoniously with his fellow-men? No answer is given by Mencius. It is not forthcoming until we come to the *Chung Yung*, or the *Doctrine of the Mean* and the *Ta Hsüeh*, or the *Great Learning*, two books which we believe to be products of the second century B.C., a hundred years after the time of Mencius. In these, Nature in the great universe is represented to be good and homogeneous with the nature of man. This is no doubt a generalization based on very limited observation of the regularity and beneficence of nature, but it had been the deep-rooted conviction of the Chinese

moralists as early as the time of the *Book of Odes* and the *Book of History*. In the life and teaching of Confucius this implicit trust in the moral order is evident. The same may be said also of Mencius.† In the *Doctrine of the Mean* the basic idea is the idea of *ch'eng*. The term *ch'eng* has been translated by Legge as "sincerity". But "sincerity" by no means expresses what *ch'eng* here means. It is evident from a few quotations. "*Ch'eng* is the way of nature, to become *ch'eng* is the way of man."‡ "He who has attained to *ch'eng* hits what is right without effort and apprehends without the effort of thought: —he is the sage."§ "From *ch'eng* to knowledge is according to nature, and from knowledge to *ch'eng* is the result of instruction. *Ch'eng*, then knowledge; knowledge, then *ch'eng*."|| Finally, "it is only he who is possessed of the most complete *ch'eng* that can exist under heaven, who can give its full development to his nature. Able to give its full development to his own nature, he can do the same to the nature of other men. Able to give its full development to the nature of other men, he can give their full development to the natures of animals and things. Able to give their full development to the natures of creatures and things, he can assist the transforming and nourishing powers of heaven and earth. Able to assist the transforming and nourishing powers of heaven and earth he may with heaven and earth form

† See *Analects*, Book VII, chap. 22; *Mencius*, Book III, Pt. 2, chap. 2; Book I, Pt. 2, chap. 16.

‡ *Doctrine of the Mean*, chap. 20, section 18.

§ *Ibid.*

|| *Ibid.*, chap. 21.

a ternion." ¶ In other words, the man of *ch'eng* participates in the creative process of the universe.\* The English term "sincerity" is far too inadequate to express what *ch'eng* means in these passages and in the whole second part of the *Doctrine of the Mean*. It really means "harmony with nature". It is by developing the harmony in man's inner life and harmony with one's fellow-men in society that Confucius' humanity is manifested, and the capacity of developing and maintaining this harmony is what Mencius means by the goodness of human nature. It is because the nature of the great universe is harmony—"the way of nature"—and because man is a part of nature, that Mencius believes that man can live a harmonious life, that his nature is good.

But the investigation of nature has not been carried to a degree that we moderns would call scientific. We find some interesting speculation about cosmology in the *Appendices of the Book of Changes*, but in the Confucian canonical books, the Five Classics and the Four Books, there is little that can come under the category of the study of nature. Not until we come to the writings and sayings of the Sung philosophers † of the eleventh and twelfth centuries of the Christian era can we find any keen observation of nature, though this, too, is crude and casual from the modern point of view or

¶ *Ibid.*, chap. 22.

\* In these passages quoted, only *ch'eng* is substituted for "sincerity" in Legge's translation.

† Chou Tun-i, 1017-1073; Shao Yung, 1011-1077; Ch'eng Hao, known as Ch'eng Ming-tao, 1032-1083; Ch'eng I, known as Ch'eng I-ch'u'an, 1033-1108; Lu Hsiang-shan, 1140-1192; Chu Hsi, 1129-1200.

when judged even by the standards of the ancient Greeks.

According to the teachings of the Sung school of Neo-Confucianism everything in the physical world is the result of the interaction of the five elementary constituents, metal, wood, water, fire and earth. These five elementary constituents are produced by the interplay of the two principles, *yang* and *yin*, or the active and passive principles in the cosmos. *Yang* and *yin* proceed from the primeval principle which the Sung philosophers call the *t'ai chi*, the ultimate. Whether there is existence beyond the ultimate was the issue between Chu Hsi and his great rival, Lu Hsiang-shan. Chou Tun-i, known as Chou Lien-chi, the founder of the Sung school, used the notion of the infinite, the *wu chi*, as something which was before the ultimate. This, according to Chu Hsi, was, however, only a notion to indicate that thinking could not regress *ad infinitum* but must stop with the first term, the infinite, which is only a limiting notion rather than the actual beginning of existence which is the ultimate.

The ultimate like the absolute in Hegelian philosophy is not something existing apart from the individual things. Its existence is immanent rather than transcendent. There is the ultimate of the universe, and there is an ultimate for every individual existence in the universe. Before the universe was, however, there had already been the ultimate. This ultimate, when in action, produced the *yang* or the active principle, and when it

again became dormant, it produced the *yin* or the passive principle. But the ultimate is all the time nothing separate and distinct from the *yang* and *yin*, but immanent in them. It is immanent in the five elementary constituents and in every individual thing which is in the universe as a result of the interaction between the *yang* and *yin* by the interplay of the five elementary constituents. There is one ultimate, yet it is everywhere in everything.‡ The ultimate is the truth working in the great universe of which man is a part. The same truth is found operating everywhere in much the same way, whether in activity or at rest, for rest is also a phase of the operating of the principle. Rest is only apparent, for *yang* and *yin* are always together in everything. While the principle is in operation *yang* dominates and we see the phenomena in the universe; when it lies dormant *yin* dominates and we seem to find rest or inactivity. Humanity or *jen*, then, is the ultimate in man. *I* or the appropriate attitude is the same ultimate in reaction through man to a given situation. *Li* or social institutions are the ultimate embodied in human culture representing the accumulated past experience of man which has been the ultimate operating in human life. Nature and man are, therefore, homogeneous, because they are both in their own ways embodiments of the same ultimate, the same truth, the same reality.

The process in which the individual things come into existence is represented by the Sung philosophers

‡ *Symposium of Sung Philosophy* (issued 1415), XXVI, 5.

through the notion of *li* and *ch'i*. We must be careful to distinguish this *li* which means *principle* from the virtue *li* meaning conformity to social usage. They are represented by two different Chinese characters, although they have the same sound. *Ch'i* here means *substance*. The relation between *principle* and *substance* in the Sung philosophy reminds us much of the form and matter in Aristotle.§ We shall not pause to consider the parallel in many respects and in not a few details between the philosophy of the Greek philosopher and that of Chu Hsi, and still less the possible historical connection between them through the Nestorian missionaries in China from Syria. Our immediate concern is what Chu Hsi means by *principle* and *substance*. He says: "Principle is shapeless." || "Principle is that which transcends shapes. It is the *tao*, the root of all things." *Substance* is that by which the thing takes shape; it is the vessel which receives and holds the *principle*, the means

§ It is alluring but difficult to trace some kind of historical connection between the Sung philosophy, particularly that of Chu Hsi in the twelfth century A. D., and Aristotle. The philosophy of Aristotle may have come to China through Mohammedanism, but we can find no trace of it there. Buddhism may have served as a channel, but again the history of Buddhism in China gives us no such hint. It is not impossible for Aristotelian ideas to have come to China and influenced the thinking of Chu Hsi through the Nestorian missionaries who arrived in China first in the year 635 A.D. But owing to our scanty knowledge of the Nestorian missionary movement, we do not get much light on the subject. The only suggestive fact which may serve as a hint for further investigation is that Sergius of Resain, who died in 536 A. D. was a great Aristotelian scholar and a Syrian Nestorian theologian. See Hans Heinrich Schaeder, "Der Orient und der Griechische Erbe", Sonderdruck aus *Die Antike*, IV Band, Berlin, 1928, p. 253.

|| *Symposium of Sung Philosophy* (issued 1415), XXVI, 1.

of giving rise to the various existences. Hence, in coming into existence, man as well as things must be endowed with the *principle*, before he can have his nature, but also with the *substance*, before he can have his body. . . . There is in the universe no substance without principle, or principle without substance.” \*

The question as to the definite relation between principle and substance is not satisfactorily settled by Chu Hsi or by any of his predecessors or contemporaries. He is quite definite, however, that they are separate and not identical, although he finds it impossible to separate the two in any given thing.” †

So much in brief is the metaphysics of the Sung school. On how much knowledge of the physical universe is it based? We have already spoken of the regularity of nature which has formed one of the basic ideas of the Confucian moral philosophy from the remotest time. We read in the “Text of Confucius” in the *Great Learning*, a product of the second century B.C., about the investigation of nature as the starting point of the process of moral cultivation. The fifth chapter of the book on the investigation of nature was lost even before Chu Hsi’s time in the twelfth century A.D., and he put in views of the philosopher Ch’eng on the subject to fill the gaps. This is what he wrote and is still found in the *Great Learning*: The meaning of the expression, ‘The perfecting of knowledge depends on the investigation of things’

\* *Symposium of Sung Philosophy* (issued 1415), XVI, 1.

† *Ibid.* XXVI, 3.

is this:— If we wish to carry our knowledge to the utmost, we must investigate the principles of all things we come into contact with, for the intelligent mind of man is certainly formed to know, and there is not a single thing in which its principles do not inhere. But so long as all principles are not investigated, man's knowledge is incomplete.” ‡

But how much did the Sung philosopher know about nature? A few quotations will suffice:

“In the beginning when the universe was still in the state of chaos, one may imagine there was nothing but the two elements, water and fire. The dregs of water became earth in course of time. . . . All the hills must have once been water. It is not ascertainable now how that water became solid. . . . The finest part of fire became wind, lightning, thunder, the sun, the stars and the like.” §

“Heaven is spherical, and therefore it must rotate. The earth is square, and therefore stationary.” ||

“Immediately before the winter solstice, heaven and earth are closed up. The universe may be said to be quiet and inactive. But the sun and the moon are still incessantly in revolution.” ¶

“*Yin* and *Yang* are regular in their operation.

‡ *Great Learning*, Chap. 5.

§ *Symposium of Sung Philosophy* (issued 1415), XXVI, 13.

|| *Ibid.*, XXVI, 10.

¶ *Ibid.*

The change of cold into heat, or day into night, is quite according to a constant principle. This is the virtue of constancy . . . If man should abide by the same principle which changes not, he would become one with heaven and earth." \*

It is on casual observations like these that the Confucian moralists base their "weltanschaung". But it must be noted that the orderliness of nature in Chinese moral philosophy has not resulted from the scientific study of natural phenomena as has been the case in modern Europe. It has come entirely from the meditation of the poetic mind on the beauty and beneficence of the universe. It is indeed a faith, an ideal, which is projected into nature. The *yang* and the *yin* and the five elementary constituents are notions created by the human mind to satisfy certain of its own persistent desires to see in nature the same rationality as is presupposed in man.

It is remarkable that this Chinese expectation of orderliness in nature has not been dampened by floods, droughts, failures of crops and famines. Yet, as S. W. Williams, author of *The Middle Kingdom*, has put it, "Industry receives its just reward of food, raiment, and shelter, with a uniformity which encourages its constant exertion." The comparatively early application of whatever astronomical and meteorological knowledge was available to agriculture and its popularization among the

\* *Ibid.*

people, even in their daily life, has confirmed their belief in cosmic orderliness.

For the Chinese, therefore, orderliness and regularity are the fundamental characteristics of the universe. But the universe is orderly and regular only when everything in it is true to its own nature and plays its part faithfully. The parts are by nature to work together, and working together is the secret of the whole. Man ought to live his life according to this principle. His highest moral aim is a life harmonious within himself and harmonious with his fellow-men as well as with nature in the great universe. "Harmony is the way of Heaven, and to become harmonious is the way of man." This is the concept of *ch'eng*, the central idea in the second part of the *Doctrine of the Mean*.

*Ch'eng* is the principle of falling into line with the working of the universe. It is of general applicability for everything, and not just for man alone. But there is this difference between man and everything else in the universe. The universe is and will ever be in harmony one part with another except man who can become so only by moral effort and assiduous cultivation. The idea of freedom does not have any significant place in the thinking of the Chinese moralists. It is rather the idea of effort that is important. The virtue of the cosmos is working harmoniously. "The virtuous man is he who has appropriated the principle of the universe and applied it to his own life." ‡ Virtue is that which has been ap-

‡ *Symposium of Sung Philosophy* (issued 1415), XXXIV, 30.

propriated by the human heart and incorporated into the human character. "The following of the rationality of the universe is *tao* and its appropriation is virtue." § "What is appropriated internally is virtue, and what is manifested is conduct." || "From this it may be concluded that virtue is what is appropriated by the individual of the general principle of the universe." || When the cosmic principle *ch'eng* is appropriated by man and has become the virtue of man it is *jen*. As it is the virtue of the universe to work harmoniously, so it is the highest virtue of man to be in harmony with nature.

### *Confucian Social Ideals*

But how this human virtue is manifested varies with the station of life occupied by the individual. This is the concept of duty. Duty is the general rationality qualified by the specific circumstances under which each man has to apply the principle. It is something made obligatory to the agent by the general principle of rationality on the one hand, and on the other by the specific circumstances. In other words, duty is the demand of man's own nature as articulated by the situation in which he finds himself at the particular time. There is, therefore, no such thing as duty in the abstract. Every duty is a concrete demand on the man, and only the man who has fully developed his human nature by appropriating in

§ *Ibid.*, XXXIV, 31.

|| *Ibid.*, XXXIV, 30.

¶ *Ibid.*, XXXIV, 34.

himself the cosmic virtue of harmony knows what his duty is and is able to do it. Such a man is man indeed. When circumstances are favorable he will radiate with his transforming influence until his family, the state, and the whole world all shine with its reflected glory. All men will be transformed by his moral influence, so that men will not love their parents only, nor treat as children only their own sons; in society a competent provision will be secured for the aged till their death, employment for the able-bodied, and the means of growing up to the young; kindness and compassion shown to the widows, orphans, childless man, and those who are disabled by disease, all sufficiently maintained; males have their proper work and females their homes; articles of value accumulated not however for selfish gratification; strength exerted, not however for self-aggrandizement.\* This is the Confucian Utopia as described in the *Li Chi* or *Book of Rites* compiled in the second century B.C., showing much of the influence of Taoism and of Mo Ti, that of the latter being especially pronounced. But the central idea is still Confucian. In this Confucian Utopia the people would govern themselves and the ruler would be only a figure-head. *Li* instead of law would regulate the conduct of man, and virtue instead of force be the ruling power in society. Only when this ideal society is brought about would the Confucian sage consider himself to have reached the goal of his moral cultivation and to have fulfilled his mission as a part of the universe, pro-

\* See *Sacred Books of the East*, Vol. 27, pp. 364-366.

moting the creative process in it. This is the *summum bonum* of the Confucian moral system.

### *The Faith of the Confucian Moralist*

Would the metaphysical basis of the Confucian philosophy of life warrant the faith of its adherents in the ultimate achievement of such a lofty goal? Is the nature of man such that when free and adequate expression is given to it, it would lead to the harmonious living of all human beings together in a world community? Is there really a place in the universe for the amelioration of the world by moral efforts? Is this world of ours a fit arena for moral strife? With little metaphysical speculation but with much moral confidence the Confucian moralists answer all these questions in the affirmative and the Chinese people as a whole acquiesce. Many of the characteristics of the individuals, their patience, their industry, their ever cheerfulness, are the results of this confidence, and much of the history of the nation reflects this, too, in its continuity, its underlying stability in spite of its superficial turbulence, its steady onward progress underneath its apparent conservatism and sluggishness, if not stagnation. Such is China and such is Confucianism. China is thoroughly Confucian because Confucianism is so typically Chinese. Confucianism cannot be classified as a religion. It has, however, religious elements in it and it includes religious institutions too. Nor is it merely an ethical system, although it is pre-ponderantly so. It is the culture of the Chinese people.

## 4

BUDDHISM AND ITS CULTURAL  
EFFECTS IN CHINA*The Confucian Moral Philosophy and Religion*

IN THE pre-Confucian literature, the *Shih Ching* or *Book of Odes* and the *Shu Ching* or *Book of History*, there is to be found a distinct conception of a deity who is the ruler of the universe. This is no monotheism as some writers in the West would try to make out. Shang-ti, while he is considered the noblest of the gods, as is Zeus among the Greek gods, is only one among many. But there is little doubt that ancient Chinese regarded him as the ruler in heaven as the emperor was the ruler on earth. Shang-ti is a personal god.

In the sayings of Confucius, as recorded in the *Analects*, this classical conception of Shang-ti becomes obscure. The term heaven comes into more frequent use. Confucius never used the term Shang-ti at all. We find the term used in the *Works of Mencius* only once and that only in passing. Like Confucius he used more frequently the term heaven.

Still later when we come to the *Doctrine of the Mean*, about one hundred years or more after Mencius, the idea of a personal god almost entirely disappears. There are in the whole book as it is, some fifteen refer-

ences to the spiritual aspect of the universe, but only once the term *Shang-ti* is used, when the passage makes a casual reference to an ancient rite. The more impersonal term *t'ien*, or heaven, is used where one might expect the use of the term *Shang-ti*. The more naturalistic term *t'ien-ti*, heaven and earth, is more frequently found in the *Doctrine of the Mean*, whereas it is not found in the *Analects* and rarely in the writings of Mencius. This is particularly striking when we remember that Mencius and the unknown author of the *Doctrine of the Mean* definitely belonged to the more spiritualistic wing of the Confucian School, the tradition of which was later carried on by Tung Chung-shu of the second century B.C. and still later on by the Sung philosophers of the eleventh and twelfth centuries of our era. But naturalism even in the life of such a man of noble character as Confucius only leads to despair.

The last scene of Confucius' life is found in the *Li Chi* or *Book of Rites*. The following is quoted from Book II as translated by James Legge: "Confucius rose early (one day) and with his hands behind him, and trailing his staff, moved slowly about near the door, singing—

'The great mountain must crumble;  
The strong beam must break;  
The wise man must wither away like a plant.'

Having thus sung, he entered and sat down opposite the door. Tzu-kung had heard him, and said, 'If the great mountain crumble, to what shall I look up? If the

strong beam break, (on what shall I lean)? If the wise man wither like a plant, whom shall I imitate? The Master, I am afraid, is going to be ill.' He then hastened into the house. The Master said, 'Ch'i, what makes you so late? . . . Intelligent kings do not arise; and what one under heaven is able to take me as his Master? I apprehend I am about to die.' With this he took to his bed, was ill for seven days, and died." † Confucius died almost broken-hearted. Judged by his own aspirations, his early career was a failure. And he saw no hope in the future.

How different and how much more optimistic was Gautama's death! The Buddha was in his eightieth year and was about to die. His disciple, Ananda, was aware of this and wept. Buddha said to him, " 'Enough, Ananda, do not grieve, nor weep. Have I not already told you, Ananda, that it is in the very nature of all things near and dear unto us that we must divide ourselves from them, leave them, sever ourselves from them? How is it possible, Ananda, that whatever has been born, has come into being, is organized and perishable, should not perish? That condition is not possible . . . You have acquired much merit, Ananda; exert yourself, and soon will you be free from all depravity.'

"Then the Blessed One [i.e. Buddha] addressed the priests [who had gathered around his death bed].

"Then the venerable Ananda spoke to the Blessed One as follows:—

† *Sacred Books of the East*, Vol. 27, pp. 138-139.

'It is wonderful, Reverend Sir! It is marvelous, Reverend Sir! Reverend Sir, I have faith to believe that in this congregation of priests not a single priest has a doubt or perplexity respecting either The Buddha or the Doctrine or the Order or the Path or the course of conduct.'

'With you, Ananda, it is a matter of faith when you say that; but, with The Tathagata [i.e. the Buddha himself], Ananda, it is a matter of knowledge. . . . For of all these five hundred priests, Ananda, the most backward one has become converted and is not liable to pass into a lower state of existence, but is destined necessarily to attain supreme wisdom . . . And now, O priests, I take my leave of you; all the constituents of being are transitory; work out your salvation with diligence.' And this was the last word of The Tathagata." ‡ How different is this from the scene of Confucius' death! It is calm, serene, confident. Both may be merely tradition, but apparently the stories represent the impressions of later disciples of the general outlook on life of their respective masters. And how superb was the Death on Calvary even compared with the death of Buddha. Confucius declined to discuss death, for he had not thought much about it. When death came, he was not prepared for it. He could see nothing beyond it. §

When we turn to the writings of Hsün-tzu who repre-

‡ H. C. Warren, *Buddhism in Translation*, Cambridge, Mass., 1896, pp. 99, 108-109.

§ *Analects*, Book XI, chap. 11.

sented the more naturalistic wing and who was only some fifty years Mencius' junior, definitely earlier than the *Doctrine of the Mean*, the naturalistic tendency is more evident. The idea of divine governance in the universe totally disappears and that of impersonal law of nature takes its place. "Heaven has a constant regularity of action," he writes. "Yao [a virtuous king] was not necessary to support its order, nor could Chieh [an immoral king] destroy its order. Respond to it in governing a country, and success will result; follow it in misgovernment, and calamity will result . . . How can exalting Heaven and wishing its gifts be as good as heaping up wealth and using it advantageously? How can obeying Heaven and praising it be as good as adapting one's self to the appointments of Heaven and using them? . . . Therefore, if a person neglects what man can do and seeks for what Heaven does, he fails to understand the nature of things." || Here the Confucian teaching of self-reliance finds its clearest expression.|| True, Hsün-tzu's wing of Confucianism was not the wing that developed the Confucian thought in later ages. Chia I and Tung Chung-shu of early Han in the second century B.C. had a more spiritual emphasis, but their influence was not strong enough to bend the Confucian tradition to a development spiritual enough to satisfy the human heart. The Confucian scholars throughout the earlier Han dynasty down to its end,

|| *Works of Hsün-tzu*, trans. by H. H. Dubs, pp. 173-174.  
¶ *Ibid.*, p. 183.

about the beginning of the Christian era, were altogether too much involved in practical politics to add to the teachings of the Confucian school. It is no wonder, then, even when Confucianism was steadily gaining the favor of the Imperial Court, and when the Confucian scholars were becoming more and more dominant in the Chinese field of politics, that the *fang shih* or magicians with their alchemy, charms, and formulas seeking for immortality should have a following among those in high positions, as well as among the common people. It was in such a situation that Buddhism was being introduced into China.

### *The Introduction of Buddhism and Its Subsequent Development*

When Buddhism was first known in China is still a question in Chinese history. It may have been just a legend that Indians arrived in the capital of China in modern Shensi in the northwest in 267 B.C. to propagate their religion. The Chinese envoy Chang Ch'ien returned in 122 B.C. from the western regions and brought back information about Bactria and neighboring states. It is possible that the Chinese may have heard about Buddhism from him. But it is generally accepted that the religion of Gautama the Buddha was first introduced into China after the middle of the first century of the Christian era. The Emperor Ming-ti of the Later Han dynasty had a dream. In pursuance of the interpretation of this dream, messengers were sent to the West to

seek for the new god; and in 67 A.D. a native of central India named Kashiapmadanga, accompanied by others, came to China with the emperor's messengers bringing with them Buddha images and Buddhist literature. Kashiapmadanga and his associates at once set to work on translation, and according to tradition the result was the translation of the *Sutra of Forty-two Sections*. It is not necessary to inquire into the reliability of this story. Suffice to say that the sutra in Chinese bearing that title, as we have it now, is a much later work. It is certain, however, that Buddhism in China definitely began in the second half of the first century of the Christian era.

### *The Development of Buddhism in China*

For two centuries after that more Buddhist teachers came from the Buddhist countries in central Asia and from India. By that time Buddhism had spread throughout India and Ceylon and had been established in Nepal and Independent Tartary.\* More Buddhist literature was translated into Chinese, but there was little that could be called interpretation of the Buddhist teachings until the third century when a Chinese Buddhist layman named Chu Tzu-hsing left China to go to India in 260 A.D. in search of more Buddhist sacred writings. Some of these he found and sent back to China. Among the translations made from them was the *Fan Kwang Pan Yo Ching* from the *Prajnâ pâramitâ* literature, which

\* Cf. Joseph Edkins, *Chinese Buddhism*, London, 1893, pp. 88-89.

emphasizes the Buddhist teaching of *Sūnyāta*, frequently but erroneously rendered “emptiness” or “nothingness” in English and *k'ung* in Chinese, but it really means “the impermanence of the self-nature of conditional things”.† The idea of *Sūnyāta* is so suggestive of the idea of “non-existence”, *wu*, in the Taoist philosophy of Lao-tzu and Chuang-tzu, that for over a hundred years—until the arrival of Kumārajīva in China at the beginning of the fifth century—Buddhism was interpreted persistently in terms of Taoism. With the coming in 401 of the great Indian Buddhist scholar and translator Kumārajīva, whose literary production in Chinese Buddhist literature has been surpassed only by Hsüang-tsang of the seventh century, the *Madhyamika* or *San-lun* school of Buddhism was introduced into China and became well-founded by Chi-tsang, who died in the year 623. This school taught that all phenomena are impermanent and therefore have no reality in them. It was another form of the *Prajñā pāramitā* school; and did not flourish long in China. After the eighth century it began to decline and soon disappeared.

Kumārajīva, who died in China in the year 413, translated also the sutra entitled *Saddharma Pundarika*, “the Lotus of the Good Law,” into Chinese. However, there seems to have been an earlier translation of this sutra in the third century. It received much attention from the Buddhist scholar Hui-ssu, but became well established only in the latter part of the century by the ef-

† See Yamakami Sogen, *op. cit.* pp. 7-28.

forts of the famous Chih-k'ai (522-597) with its literature properly expounded by Kuan-ting who died in the year 632. This was known as the T'ien t'ai school from the name of the mountain on which was the temple where Chih-k'ai lived and taught. The sutra is highly metaphysical; its main teaching is that phenomena are real but as perceived by the mind they are unreal. The reality in phenomena is transcendental and therefore unspeakable, for language is entirely inadequate for it. Aside from reality there are no phenomena. It is in the phenomena that reality manifests itself. Yet, losing sight of the reality we see nothing in the phenomena. It is only when we see reality in all phenomena that each phenomenon has its significance. After the T'ang dynasty this school practically disappeared in the tenth century. It was later revived for a short period, but until the present day it has had the attention of only a few scholars.

The great Chinese Buddhist scholar, traveler, and translator Hsüan-tsang (596-664) started from China in 629 to go to the land of Buddha's birth in order to procure Sanskrit books for the edification of the followers of Buddhism in China. He left China from Lanchow in the northwestern extremity of China, passed through a part of Central Asia where the Turks were then settled, and crossed the mountains into India. His journey took him to the area through which the Ganges flows. He lingered long there to master the languages and to learn from the Buddhist teachers as much as possible;

he completed the tour of the Indian peninsula, and after seventeen years away from home set out for China across the Indies, bringing with him Buddha relics, Buddha statues, and 178 Buddhist works in Sanskrit. Upon his return home the Emperor, Hsüan-tsung of the T'ang dynasty, ordered him to correct some of the earlier translations done in the fifth century by Kumārajīva. He completed before his death 75 works in 1335 sections, the most notable being the *Ch'êng wei-shih-lun*, which together with the commentary written by his pupil Kuei-chi (632-682), known in Buddhist history as the Master of the Tz'u-ên temple, has given rise to the Wei-shih or Only-Consciousness school, which is the Chinese form of the Indian Yogâcâra school. It teaches that all objects in the universe are merely the manifestations of consciousness. It is subjective idealism. Like the T'ien-t'ai school, this school had its best days in the seventh century, and after the ninth century it practically disappeared. There is a feeble revival in the present-day China, attracting the attention of only a few philosophically-minded scholars, the best known being the late Ou-yang Ching Wu.

While Hsüan-tsang and his pupil Kuei-chi were propagating the teachings of the Wei-shih or Only-Consciousness school based on the Indian Yogâcâra, another highly metaphysical school of Buddhism was springing up in China with the composition by Tu Fa-shun (557-640) of the two treatises entitled *Fa-chia-kwan* or *Theory of the Dharmalaka* and *Wu-chiao-chi-kwan* or

*The Theoretical and Practical Sides of the Five Doctrines.* The teaching of this school was further systematized by Fa-tsang, better known as Hsien-shou. This school is known as Hua-yen in China, a name derived from the Sanskrit work “Buddhavatamsaka-mahâ vaipuyâ Sûtra,” and it traces its origin to Asvaghosha in India as its first patriarch and Nâgârjuna as its second patriarch; its founder in China, Tu Fa-shun is hailed as the third patriarch.

Its teaching may be summarized as follows: (1) The universe is the manifestation of the One Great Spirit, “One mind in which is included the whole of the universe,” as the Sanskrit expression has it. (2) This One mind is infinite and absolute, and the objective universe is only a reflection of it. The One Mind is called the *Dharmakâya*, the essence of all Buddhas, and as such it is the object of belief of the true Buddhists. (3) From the point of view of the *Dharmalaka*, i.e., the objective world, all things that exist are separate and distinct, subject to the law of individuation, particularization, and, therefore, also to the law of limitation. They exist in time and space and move according to the law of causation, in the social and moral realm as well as in the physical realm. (4) But from the noumenal point of view all things in the objective world, in spite of their distinctions, are one because they all have the same source and are but manifestations of the One Mind, the *Dharmakâya*. (5) We thus come to the idea of “one in many and many in one.” The phenomena of the

universe do not exist apart from reality, noumenon, nor does the noumenon exist apart from the phenomena. There is such a strict harmony between noumenon and each of the phenomena that it is impossible to separate the one from the other. Noumenon is the substratum of all phenomena, and every phenomenon is an attribute of the noumenon, as Yamakami Sogen, a modern Japanese Buddhist scholar, puts it. From one point of view we see a world of particulars in which individuality and diversity seem to predominate, yet from another point of view, all distinctions and contradictions vanish in a higher principle of unity. (6) So far we see little difference between the teaching of the T'ien-t'ai school and the Hua-yen or Avatamsaka school. Both emphasize the harmony and concord between noumenon and phenomena, the *Dharmakâya* and the *Dharmalaka*. But the Hua-yen goes further and raises the question of the relation of things to things, of the many to the many, in the objective universe. Its answer is that all phenomena, being the manifestations of the Only Reality, the One Mind, noumenon, are inseparably connected among themselves and are in harmony with one another. All particular existences in the *Dharmalaka* are manifestations of the *Dharmakâya*, the Buddha Essence, and they, one and all, therefore perform the work of Buddha. The logical conclusion is that even inanimate things should lead us to the state of enlightenment. It is the Buddhist doctrine of absolute equality among all things, animate or inanimate, the principle of the Oneness in nature.

Things do not have the same qualities; they are different on account of different qualities in them. But they are only different members of the same unity each with a different function, all, however, working harmoniously for the manifestation of the *Dharmakâya*.‡

Since the eighth century this school has had only a small following in China. It is confined to the few who are metaphysically minded. While the *Avatamsâka* sutra, or *Hua-yen-ching*, in Chinese is still considered the queen of the sutras, there are not many who read it and fewer still who can grasp its ideas.

### *The Fate of Philosophical Buddhism in China*

Such is the fate of all the more philosophical schools of Buddhism in China. The T'ien-t'ai, the Wei-shih, and the Hua-yen are schools each with a charming though complicated religious philosophy, which well deserve the attention of students of metaphysics. Yet, all these schools fail to elicit from the Chinese any enthusiastic response. It is strange that the *Prajnâ pâramitâ* school has, on the other hand, not met with a failure equal to that of the other three schools, although philosophically speaking it is the weakest and has really been superseded by the later developments of Buddhist philosophy in China as well as in India. It may be because it had a good start as an early comer at a time when, from the fourth through the sixth century, a lighter type of Taoist philosophy tinged with cynicism was in vogue

‡ See Yamakami Sogen, *op. cit.* pp. 287-296.

among the literati in China, and the teaching of the Void, which is a mispresentation of the Buddhist *sûnyâta*, appeared to be quite similar to it in tone and in spirit. Perhaps its comparative naivete puts it more within the reach of the Chinese mind and makes it more palatable to the Chinese taste. The *Chin-kang-ching* or Diamond sutra is much read and it must have helped in popularizing the *Prajnâ pâramitâ* teaching.

### *Buddhist Schools That Have Succeeded in China*

It is the less philosophical Buddhist schools that have retained their Chinese adherents, the Ch'an or the Meditative and the Pure Land or *Amitâbha* schools. The Pure Land school is the less philosophical of the two and it has the largest following of all.

The Ch'an school derives its name from the Sanskrit *Dhyâna* which means "ecstatic meditation". It ought to be pointed out here that the practise of *dhyâna* is not peculiar to this school. The Buddhists of all the schools, Hinayanists and Mahayanists alike, believe in it and practise it. *Dhyâna*, *Sila* (i.e. observation of the Buddhist moral precepts), and *Prajnâ* or wisdom are considered essential to the Buddhist life. The Ch'an school, however, teaches that meditation alone is sufficient to enlightenment. In the nature of every man there is the Buddha-nature. Buddhahood is therefore not to be sought outside of the human heart; it is to be realized in the human heart. Ignorance of this truth is the root of all

ignorance; knowledge of it is enlightenment itself. Human nature is originally untainted, impassable, unchanged by even ignorance; it is indestructible. To know this is to attain Buddhahood.

This knowledge may come to us intuitively and suddenly because it is potential in us. This Buddha-nature in our nature can really have no name. The realization of this truth—the truth that Buddhahood is to be sought in our own nature and in it alone—cannot be learned from books. It is not to be found by the study of the sutras, nor by the observation of the precepts of discipline, the Vinaya. It can come only by intuition. When it is caught, it just dawns on us. There it is, and it is unspeakable, entirely beyond words. It is mysticism.

This teaching was brought to China by Bodhidharma from south India who was the founder of the Ch'an school in China and who died in China between 534 and 537. True to his teaching the Ch'an school takes no written book as its standard work. He who catches by intuition the insight into its basic truth has obtained the whole truth essential to enlightenment. According to the Buddhist records, the fifth patriarch, Hung-jên, was about to pass on the patriarchy to his successor who was to be selected on the basis of the gâthâ (poem) the candidate could produce showing his insight into the truth. One of the elders in the temple wrote his gâthâ on the wall and the monks in the temple thought that he had succeeded. His gâthâ was as follows:

“The body is like the knowledge tree.  
The mind is like a mirror stand.  
It should be constantly and carefully brushed,  
Lest dust should be attracted to it.”

Another monk, uneducated in book learning, heard about this and was not satisfied with it. As he could not write himself, he asked some one to write on the wall the following:

“There is no such thing as a knowledge tree.  
There is no such thing as a mirror stand.  
There is nothing that has real existence.  
How can dust be attracted then?”

This uneducated monk was Hui-nêng (638-713) and he was made the sixth patriarch of the Ch'an school.

Intuition is highly individualistic. When no written record is accepted as authoritative, it is difficult for tradition to be binding. The school was soon split into five sects, two of which split, again, making a total of seven. The surprising thing is that there have been no more divisions of the sects; and even more surprising is the fact that five of the seven died out leaving only two in modern China. As meditation is practised by all Buddhists it is really difficult to say how large a following the school has at present. Few however are those who would test the insight of a Ch'an Buddhist in China today by his instantaneous answer to such a question

as "How did you look before you were born?", or, "Why does the dog not have the Buddha-nature?" The true Ch'an Buddhist would take such a question and search his own heart for a satisfactory answer—which is sometimes given by a monk of insight with a hearty laugh saying no word whatever, and you can make anything out of it. This is Ch'an Buddhism. If the answer to an apparently silly question should lead to the insight into the real nature of human existence, so as to dispel all perplexities and anxieties in life by the knowledge that the individual does not exist and that all particularizations are illusions, then you have attained enlightenment by the Ch'an method. When this insight is obtained, further meditation is still necessary, according to Ch'an technique, to allow it to permeate the whole of our existence.

It is evident that the Ch'an school has a philosophy, but unlike the philosophical schools of Buddhism it does not emphasize the study and understanding of philosophy; it emphasizes insight into it by intuition. This is the secret of its success among the Chinese. It is a school that has stood the test of the ages in China.

The Pure Land or Amitâbha school of Buddhism puts even less emphasis upon philosophy. The strength of the school lies in its ability to meet a practical need in the religious life of the people. According to the traditional teaching of Buddhism, Buddhahood can be attained only by accumulated merits. There are six realms (the Buddhist calls them paths) of existence, and they are hell,

*Pretas* or hungry ghosts, brutes, human beings, *Asuras* or titans, and gods. The gods have their existence in 28 heavens, each different in degrees of blissfulness. These six realms of existence are classified into three worlds: the world of Desire (*Kâmadhâtu*), the world of Form (*Rûpadhâtu*), and the world of Formlessness (*Arûpadhâtu*). The world of Desire embraces the first five realms of existence and the lowest six of the 28 heavens of the gods. The world of Form consists of the next higher 18 of the 28 heavens of the gods, and the world of Formlessness consists of the highest four heavens of the gods. Every form of existence, the gods not excepted, is subject to the law of birth, old age, and death. Every death means another birth, another incarnation. What form that incarnation takes depends upon the *karma* of the previous incarnation, its good and its evil, not a balance of the two, but every deed, good or evil, which with all the other deeds goes to make up the *karma*. It may mean birth into a better realm of existence, an *Asura* after having been a man, or a god after having been an *Asura*; or into a lower realm, a brute after having been a man, or a hungry ghost after having been a brute. This process is generally known as transmigration. To be free from this ceaseless process of transmigration is Nirvana. Nirvana is from the Sanskrit root *va* which means "blowing", with the prefix *nir* which denotes absence or privation. According to Yamakami Sogen, the *Abhidharma-mahâvîbhâsha-sastra*, now extant only in Hsüan-tsang's Chinese translation, the following deriva-

tion, among others, of the word Nirvana is given: *vana* means "the path of transmigration" and *nir* means "leaving off" or "being away from". Therefore Nirvana means "the leaving off permanently all the paths of transmigration." §

This is, however, a slow process. It is what the Buddhist calls the difficult path, although it is the Holy Path. The Pure Land Buddhist maintains that it was not so difficult to follow this difficult path when the Buddha was still on earth. Now that he is no longer here with us, and his entering into Nirvana having taken place so long ago, it is not easy to comprehend even his profound teaching in this defiled world of "men of unclean lips". An easier way must be found and it is revealed by the Pure Land School.

The teaching of this school is contained in three sutras, the so-called larger and smaller *Sukhāvatī-vyūha* sutras and the *Amitāyurdhyāna* sutra.|| According to the larger *Sukhāvatī-vyūha* sutra, there was in the remote past a Buddha named *Lokesvararaga*; at the same time there was a *bhikshu* whose name was *Dharmākara*. He was a prince but, aspiring to Buddhahood, he abandoned his principality, became a monk, and came to inquire of the Buddha about the glories and splendors of all the Buddha lands. Having been told of these, he asked whether it would be possible for all these glories and splendors to be concentrated in his Buddha land,

§ Yamakami Sogen, *op. cit.* p. 31.

|| See translation in *Sacred Books of the East*, Vol. 49.

should he ever succeed in reaching Buddhahood. After he had been assured of this possibility he took 48 vows expressing the deepest desires of his own heart. Unless these vows were all fulfilled he would refuse to become a Buddha. The 18th of these 48 vows was that he would not become a Buddha unless it was possible for any of the sentient beings, except those who had committed any any of the five heinous sins, to be reborn into his Buddha-land immediately after death, if only they would desire to be thus reborn and turn to him in faith by reciting his Buddha name even as few times as ten before death. Now he has become a Buddha and, so the Pure Land school reasons, it must be possible for any sentient being to be reborn into the Pure Land, the Buddha land of Buddha Amitâbha, if it would only turn to Buddha Amitâbha in faith and call on him by reciting his Buddha name even as few times as ten before death comes. Thus, the formula, *nan-mo-Buddha-Amitâbha*, which are six monosyllabic characters in Chinese meaning "turning in faith to Buddha Amitâbha." This formula has been on the lips of thousands upon thousands of faithful Pure Land Buddhists in China every day. The formula is cut into the rocks on the mountainside, inscribed on stone tablets in the temples, and even written on lamp, telegraph and telephone posts in the cities and on the highways so that perchance people may see and recite it in order to have the benefit of the efficacy of Buddha Amitâbha's 18th vow taken before he became Buddha.

This is simple faith. It involves neither the study of any abstruse book nor the understanding of any difficult doctrine. It means only the will to turn to Buddha Amitâbha and believe in the efficacy of his vows—and it is sacrilegious not to believe it for it would mean to regard the Buddha as a liar. The strength of the school is therefore the naivete of its teaching.

But to be reborn into the Pure Land, the land of extreme blissfulness in the West, is not to enter paradise. The Pure Land is not the final stage. Buddhahood is still to be attained in the Pure Land, and this depends still upon one's own strenuous endeavor. The only difference between striving towards Nirvana in the Pure Land and striving for the same goal in our world is that the Pure Land being pure, i.e. free from defilement, assures a steady, rapid progress without any danger of backsliding. It is misleading to call this type of Buddhism, "salvation by faith." Faith in the efficacy of Amitâbha's vows, leading one's turning to him and reciting his Buddha name, gets one only birth into his Pure Land where salvation is not yet—if by salvation is meant the attainment of Buddhahood which for the Buddhist is equivalent to entering into Nirvana.

This Pure Land faith is, however, not magic. The efficacy of Amitâbha's vows is there to be appropriated by any being who has faith to call on his name. Faith of the devotee is equally essential. Only when the efficacy of the vow is met by the faith of the devotee is birth into the Pure Land possible.

To complete the picture of Buddhism in China, brief reference to Mantraism must be made. It is a strange and very abstruse form of religion made up of extremely idealistic and materialistic elements. Little is known of its origin or history in India. It seems to have flourished in south India during the last centuries of Buddhist history in that land, when the influence of Hinduism was becoming stronger and stronger on the religion of Gautama. The result was an "all identifying idealism" with a mystic interpretation of the material as well as ideal worlds. Many texts and formulas were produced and were widely prevalent. The most important was *Mahāvairocanā-bhi-sambodhi*, brought to China by an Indian by the name of Subhakara-sinha who died in the year 735. According to Professor Anesaki of Tokyo, "the Buddha . . . is nothing but the whole universe, the *dharmadhātu*, including its six elements—earth, water, fire, air, space, and consciousness. It is his real body, the *dharmakāya*, and it may be divided into two complementary constituents, the mental and the material . . . The individualized phenomena are, in this way, nothing but the Buddha's revelation to himself, and at the same time the methods of benediction embracing all beings. The whole is called the Buddha *Mahā-vairochana*. The numberless manifestations of his body, such as Buddhas, Bodhisattvas, . . . etc. make up the whole pantheon of the religion," while the historical Buddha is reduced to naught in this system of mysticism, so much so that his actual personality means little. "With the disinte-

gration of the personal Buddha", says Professor Anesaki, "the Buddhist religion . . . reached dissolution and all kinds of abuses and superstitions were accepted and justified." ¶

While in China proper this form of Buddhism has not been much in vogue except the worship of Ti-tsang, (Kshitigarbha, meaning "Earth Womb",) the vanquisher of hell and protector of children, represented as descending to the underworld with a shining pearl in one hand to throw light on the darkness and a heavy staff in the other to knock down the gate of hell if necessary, it is widespread in Mongolia and Tibet in the form of Lamaism with its *dhâranis* or charms, little understood even by the priests and merely mystifying to the people. It is known as the *Chênyen* school. *Chênyen* or true word, meaning the formulae or charms in the Tibetan language that are unintelligible to the people in China. Originally it meant the esoteric symbols.

Thus whatever success Buddhism has been able to achieve in China has not been achieved by a uniformity of its teaching. It has offered a variety of doctrines and forms of devotion for the Chinese to choose and develop; otherwise it might have died out in China long ago. "Denominations" certainly exist among the Buddhists in China as well as in the land of Buddha's birth, and we cannot trace the decline of Buddhism in India or its limited influence in China to the division of the Buddhist

¶ See Masaharu Anesaki, "Mantra Buddhism" in James Hastings, *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, New York, 1912, Vol. IV, p. 840.

community. Its decline in India had a historical reason, which was the revival of Hinduism and the failure of Buddhism to keep its own identity. Its limited influence in China has been due to the fact that Buddhism cannot make an impact upon the social and political structure of the Chinese. To make a social and political impact upon a nation like China is not its genius. Hence its influence has been limited to art, to certain types of literature, and to thinking which has no social or political significance. Buddhism in China is only a religion for the recluse and speculation for the student of philosophy.

It took Buddhism a long time to get results, but patience and persistence are Buddhist virtues. It was only in 335 A.D. that the Chinese government first gave official permission for Chinese to take the Buddhist monastic vows. That was 268 years after the introduction of Buddhism into China could be definitely dated. We often hear now of the beautiful Buddhist literature in Chinese. Certainly Buddhism has produced a wonderful literature in the Chinese language, but only a few can read it and still fewer can understand and appreciate it. The best translations were done by Chinese Buddhists, Hsüan-tsang and his associates and disciples of the seventh century A.D., nearly six hundred years after the introduction of Buddhism into China. This literature has won the admiration of many Chinese who have never read it and have known it only by reputation!

*Buddhist Influence in China*

As to Buddhist influence on Chinese art there is no room for dispute. There Buddhism has made the most notable contribution, not so much in technique as in inspiration, in opening up avenues to the imagination which the indigenous Chinese culture had left unexplored. There are beautiful serene temples on the most scenic spots of woody mountain tops, dedicated to such Bodhisattvas as Kuan-yin or Avalokitesvara on the island of P'u-t'o, P'u-hsien or Samantabhadra on Mount O-mei, Wên-hsu or Manjusri on Mount Wu-t'ai, and Hua-kuang on Mount Chiu-hua—all of which have become centers of pilgrimage not for the Buddhists alone, but for all Chinese. There are not only the noble traditions of painting and sculpture which owe their inspiration to Buddhism, without which we may doubt whether these arts would ever have reached the heights of development they have reached in China, but there are also the pagodas, originally *stupas*—more often without the Buddhist relics which they are supposed to enshrine. They add to the beauty and charm of the places where they stand, and strike the eye and win not only the admiration of every visitor but also the heart which is directed to the unseen, so often forgotten in the bustle of life. Extricated from the intricate systems of abstruse philosophy and soaring above all crude superstitions, the best of Buddhist teachings are preached not by word of mouth but by becoming incarnate in art. And the

journey-worn pilgrim, the austere mendicant, and the devout woman who counts her numberless *nam-mo-o-mi-to-fu* on the rosary beads—these pious souls remind the matter-of-fact Chinese of the values which Confucius neglected. Confucian China can ill afford to forego the Buddhist contributions.

### *The Cultural Effects of the Introduction of Buddhism Into China*

We have indicated that it was when the indigenous Confucian culture failed to meet the spiritual needs of the Chinese because of its undue emphasis on its ethico-political ideas at the expense of its already-slim religious element, that Buddhism happened to be introduced into China and found a ready welcome. During the reign of the Han Emperor Wu-ti in the second half of the second century B.C., Confucianism was declared the state system of teaching and from that time on the teachings of the Confucian school became more and more the state dogmas for many dynasties to come. Questions could not be raised regarding the nature of the political system and that of the social structure. It was not until the onrush of western ideas in the twentieth century that the situation changed. In other words, for fully two thousand years the Confucian classics served as the *Magna Charta* of the Chinese people, socially as well as politically.

But outside of the ethico-political realm the religious quest went on as before, among those in high positions

as well as among the masses of the people. The Emperor Wu-ti himself was as much addicted to the search for the Isle of the Immortals, and the alchemy of the elixir of life as was the First Emperor of Ch'in. Such esoteric teachings as those of *yang* and *yin*, i.e., the active and passive principles of the universe, and the mysterious interactions of the five elements—water, fire, wood, metal, and earth—teachings which originally had no place whatever in the Classics—pervaded the writings of several outstanding Confucian scholars of the early Han. We need to mention only Lu Chia, Chia I, and Tung Chung-shu. The Classics were given esoteric interpretations which would have shocked Confucius and Mencius. But the craving for knowledge of the unseen and for oracular guidance in public and private life had to be satisfied. This gave rise to Taoism as a religion which ought to be carefully distinguished from the philosophical Taoism of Lao-tzu and his school. Religious Taoism owes its inception to Chang Tao-ling (34-156 A.D.) who, rather than Lao-tzu, was its real founder. Its beginning is shrouded in obscurity. With the few historical data available we may say that Chang Tao-ling made use of the search for the elixir, the magical practice of charms and spells, the age-long methods of divination, and made a religion of the mixture—taking the more obscure parts of the Taoist writings as his scriptures. This syncretism took place when philosophical Taoism was at its lowest ebb. Buddhism was introduced into China at about the same time. Of its in-

fluence on Taoism as a religion, more will be said later. Suffice it to mention here that it gave the Chinese for the first time the idea of religion as a separate institution, and thus furnished an impetus to the organization of the Taoist religion.

The introduction and spread of Buddhism made a significant impact upon Confucian thinking as well.

Confucianism had been rather inactive since the Eastern Han dynasty, which ended in the first quarter of the third century A.D. The great Emperor T'ai Tsung of the T'ang dynasty in the seventh century made an effort to arouse Confucianism to activity again. The text of the Classics was standardized and commentaries were compiled by the best scholars of the time. The Classics were inscribed on stone tablets for the first time and these tablets were set up in front of the Imperial Academy to assure their correct reading. But it was not yet time for a real revival of Confucian learning. The new teachings of Buddhism and the activities of the new Taoist religious movements seemed to engage too thoroughly the attention of the best minds from the third to the eighth centuries of the Christian era. Those who were not interested in these new movements spent their time and energy in pure literature, *belles lettres*, which developed to a higher level in this period than in any other. The early T'ang was really the Golden Age of Chinese fine arts and literature, but not productive in moral and political ideas along the line of the Chinese genius. One of the interesting features of Chinese think-

ing at this time was eclecticism, to show the similarity, if not identity, of Buddhism, Taoism, and Confucianism. The first sign of this appeared as early as the latter part of the second century and more of it in the fifth century. Even as influential a writer as Liu Tsung-yüan (773-819) was in favor of eclecticism as a solution of the religious conflicts of the time.

The Confucian reaction to the intrusion of the new religions became articulate first through the efforts of Han Yü at the beginning of the ninth century. The Emperor Hsüan-tsung sent officials in 819 A.D. to escort a bone of Gautama Buddha from Shensi in the northwest to the capital, whereupon Han Yü wrote his famous memorial against the reception of the Buddha's bone. In his essay, "An Enquiry into a Scheme of Life", he launched the first Confucian frontal attack on Buddhism and Taoism. His knowledge of Buddhism and Taoism was not profound and his criticisms were superficial, but he represented the first stir of new life in Confucianism after several centuries of torpor. He harked back to the ancient sage-kings, to Confucius, and Mencius. "What is the religion of the revered beings?" he began by asking. His answer was: "Its literature is composed of the books of Odes, of History, of Changes, the Spring and Autumn Classic; its culture includes ceremonies and music, rubrics and ordinances; its people are scholars, farmers, artisans, and traders; its ties embrace the prince, the minister, the father, the son, the teacher, the friend, the guest, the host, the brother, the

husband, and the wife." "Make useful men of these fellows (priests, etc.); burn their books; make dwellings of their residences; make clear to them the teaching of the former kings and instruct them in their methods. Find a livelihood for the celibates and nuns, the orphans, the dependents, and the impotent."\* Han Yü wrote as a Confucian disciple, reminding one of Mencius. He showed clearly his Confucian hall-mark by stressing the social significance of the classical teaching. For him the most objectional feature of Buddhism and Taoism was their anti-social teachings. His criticism was that the modern man desiring to cultivate the heart, does it without reference to the empire and the kingdom; he would annihilate social relations.

But Han Yü's reaction to the new religions was only negative; he simply did not approve them. The constructive reaction came with the Sung philosophers of the eleventh and twelfth centuries, the greatest of these being Chu Hsi (1129-1200). We shall not take the time to inquire how much of Buddhism or of Taoism or of both there is in their ideas. Certainly it is an exaggeration to say with Legge that neo-Confucianism of this period is more Taoist than Confucian; or, with Liang Ch'i-ch'aō that it is nothing but Buddhism in a Confucian garb. Undoubtedly both Buddhism and Taoism have contributed to its stimulation, and the Taoist influence was more dominant, but its general tone and emphasis are

\* Evan Morgan, *A Guide to Wenli Styles and Chinese Ideals*, London, 1912, pp. 76, 78.

distinctly Confucian, harking back to the Confucian Classics, particularly the *Great Learning*, the *Doctrine of the Mean*, and the *Appendices of the Book of Changes*, in which Confucian teaching had already in the second century B. C. absorbed much of philosophical Taoism.

Even to mention the names of the Sung philosophers would be impossible within the limits of this chapter. There are scores of them. The important ones are, however, few. The founder of the school was unquestionably Chou Tun-i (1017-1073), but the best known is Chu Hsi. Professor Bruce would have us believe that "present-day Confucianism—that is, the system of ethical and metaphysical conceptions current in China for the last seven hundred years—is rather Chu Hsi's philosophy than that of Confucius." † This is exaggeration, but at least we may say that Chu Hsi was the greatest systematizer of the Confucian teachings.

The paramount problems of the Sung philosophers are the nature of the universe and of man, the evolution of the many from the one, and the ethical implications and ramifications of these problems. The main point in their teaching is to show that the nature of the universe is moral and that human nature is organic to it. From their hands the Confucian moral philosophy receives the support of a metaphysical basis which was first laid in the *Doctrine of the Mean* in the second century, B.C.

Early in the development of this Sung school there appeared two divergent lines: One was more intuitive,

† J. P. Bruce, *Chu Hsi and His Masters*, London, 1923, pp. ix-x.

represented by Ch'eng Ming-tao (1032-1085), Lu Hsiang-shan (1140-1192), and Wang Yang-ming (1472-1529); the other, represented by Ch'eng I-ch'uan (1033-1108) and Chu Hsi (1129-1200) was more empirical. The first held that man, the microcosm, is a perfect mirror of the universe, the macrocosm. Their ideas were based on those of Mencius, who said "all things are already complete in us." ‡ Following this, Lu Hsiang-shan made a most remarkable utterance that "the classics are merely footnotes to my own nature", and later Wang Yang-ming maintained that apart from the mind there is neither reason nor thing, and that for all moral purposes it is enough to bring forth the intuitive knowledge of the mind. When this line of thought was developed by Wang Yang-ming it approached closely the Buddhism of the Ch'an school.

The empirical development of the Sung philosophy culminated in Chu Hsi in the twelfth century. "If we carry our knowledge to the utmost", said Chu Hsi, "we must investigate the principles of all things." He advocated the inductive method, and his method differs from the modern scientific method in the West not in spirit or attitude but in the lack of development in its technique. But we must remember that Chu Hsi lived in the twelfth century in China. For man to live his moral life and to play his part in the community, an adequate knowledge of his relation to external things and to other persons is essential, according to Chu Hsi. This knowl-

‡ *Works of Mencius*, Book VII, Pt. I, chap. 4.

edge comes only from investigation, careful study, and the accumulation of experience. As a result there may come an insight to enable us to penetrate the moral situation. But Wang Yang-ming complains of the tediousness of this slow process and declares it to be humanly impossible. He would resort to intuition.

In the development of Chinese moral ideas, Chu Hsi has been preferred to Wang Yang-ming; empirical knowledge has been preferred to intuition. This shows not only the practical bent of the Chinese mind but also that the Chinese are by temperament Confucian rather than Buddhist or Taoist. To perform our moral task we have not only to look within ourselves, as Wang Yang-ming maintains, but also outwards to our fellow-beings, their actual situations and their needs, and to external things so that in relation to these we may find our place in society and in the world. Have the possibilities and implications of this line of thought been exhausted by Chu Hsi and his successors in China? If not, there is still a future for Confucianism.

## 5

THE TAOIST RELIGION AND THE RELIGION  
OF THE PEOPLE IN CHINA*The Development of the Taoist Religion*

**I**N A previous chapter we have already tried to distinguish between Taoism as a philosophy and Taoism as a religion. Lao-tzu is commonly referred to as the founder of Taoism. But leaving aside the question of Lao-tzu as an historical personage and considering *Taoism* only as a book, we know from history for certain that there had been legends of the Taoist type for centuries before there was any Taoism as a religion. As a religion Taoism began with Chang Ling, known as Chang Tao-ling, in the second century of the Christian era.

The history of Chang Tao-ling is very obscure. The Taoist books are full of legends and, as might be expected, more legends have grown up around the name of Chang Tao-ling than around any other Taoist name. Let us consider four of the Taoist books, all in Chinese, the titles of which may be translated as *Biographies of Genii*, *An Enlarged Edition of the Researches on Spirits*, *Records of Taoist Friends*, and *The Book of the Philosopher Embracing Simplicity*. In these we do not find agreement even as to the place of birth of Chang Tao-

ling, which is an important item in a Chinese biography. The Chinese official history, *Tz Tzu T'ung Ch'ien Kang Mu*, of the Sung dynasty, accepts the tradition that he was born in Chekiang, that he practised magic and searched for 'the elixir of life, and that finally during his sojourn in Szechuan he acquired the secret, when Lao-tzu revealed himself to him. With this, Chang Tao-ling, aged 123 years, ascended bodily into heaven with his wife and two of his followers, leaving his formulas to his son whose name was Chang Hêng.

People like Chang Tao-ling had been known in Chinese history from about the latter part of the third century B.C. to the beginning of the Christian era as "men with formulas" or *fang shih*. Only since that period have the same class of people been referred to as *tao shih* or "men of the Taoist religion".

We do not find any writings from these people until the *Tai Ping Ching Ling Shu*, which seems to have made its first appearance at the beginning of the third century A.D.

In the records of the Later Han dynasty. (25-220 A.D.) we find that in 184 A.D., Chang Chio, a descendant of Chang Tao-ling, started an uprising known as the rebellion of the Yellow Turbans. He was a magician, and by his power to cure diseases by magical methods he was able to gather around him a large following, known as troops of demon soldiers. The rebellion was soon suppressed, but one of his followers, by the name Yu Chi, continued to teach his magical for-

mulas in south China. In the official history of the period of the Three Kingdoms (following the Later Han dynasty), we find it recorded that during the reign of the Emperor Shun of the Later Han dynasty a man named Kung Shêng presented to the Imperial Court a book obtained by his teacher Yu Chi, entitled, *Tai Ping Ching Ling Shu*. This book was the first distinct product of the Taoist religion. The other books claimed by the Taoists were books of Lao-tzu and Chuang-tzu which had little to do with religion directly and were chronologically much earlier than Chang Tao-ling. There is in the Taoist religious canon, as we have it now, a book entitled *Tai Ping Ching*, and this has been identified as substantially the same as the *Tai Ping Ching Ling Shu*, though in a mutilated form.§ This later work seems to be, however, a product of the seventh century A.D. with later interpolations.

When Chang Chio in the second century A.D. started the rebellion of the Yellow Turbans, he assumed the title of *T'ien Shih* or Heavenly Teacher, which may have already been used by his forebears and predecessors in the magical religious movement of Taoism. It is the common belief that the Heavenly Teacher has always been on the Mount of Dragon and Tiger in Kiangsi, but a careful examination of the historical geography of the Chinese provinces and districts seems to indicate that

§ See Fu Chin-chia, *History of Chinese Taoism* (in Chinese), Commercial Press, Shanghai, 1937, pp. 57-76.

the Mount of Dragon and Tiger became the official abode of the head of the Taoist religion only in 1016 A.D. when the Taoist Chang Ch'eng-sui was honored by the Sung Emperor Ch'en Tsung. The title *T'ien Shih* or Heavenly Teacher is hereditary.

### *Taoism in the North*

Thus far this discussion has considered only Taoism in the South. In the north of China there arose in the middle of the fifth century A.D. another Taoist movement. According to the official records of the Northern Dynasty of Wei, there was a Taoist devotee by the name K'ou Ch'ien-chih who during the reign of the Northern Emperor T'ai Wu Ti was practising the Taoist religion, but found no satisfactory result by his therapeutic methods. He was, however, persistent in his search for the elixir of life. One day a deity appeared to him, mounted on a dragon and surrounded by clouds of hundreds of spirits, genii and others in the entourage. This spiritual company halted on the summit of the mount where K'ou Ch'ien-chih was having his abode and announced himself as T'ai Shan Lao Ch'ung, (i.e. Lao-tzu). He said to K'ou: "In the past year it was reported to Heaven by the guarding spirit of this mount that since the time of Chang Tao-ling there has been a lack of religious piety on earth, that those who try to follow the good way have had no teachers to instruct them in religion, and that the Taoist scholar, K'ou Ch'ien-chih, of

Shan-ku dwelling on Mount Shun was a man of right conduct, living according to the ways of nature, qualified to be a model Taoist, and ought to be set up as the First Teacher of the Religion. I, therefore, come to see you and ordain you, K'ou Ch'ien-chih, as the Heavenly Teacher, giving you the *Ping Ching Yuen* in twenty rolls, a book on discipline, which has not been taught on earth since the beginning of heaven and earth. Now the time is ripe that you should have this book to proclaim my new discipline and reform the Taoist religion, purging from it the faulty teachings of the Changs, with their levies in rice and money and all the sexual magic which could not be tolerated by the Taoist Way of Purity and Void. You ought to emphasize as of first importance the rules of conduct and discipline, adding to them, however, therapeutic and meditative practices." Later, K'ou Ch'ien-chih received also from Li Pu-wen, an eminent Taoist teacher, books of formulas by which spirits could be summoned at any instant in religious services and by which religious services could be held for the benefit even of one's deceased ancestors. With this, K'ou Ch'ien-chih inaugurated the Taoist reformed movement in North China which received so much favor and support from the Emperor T'ai Wu Ti that in the year 440 A.D. the Emperor changed the title of his reign to that of *T'ai Ping Chen Ch'un*. This marked a new epoch of the Taoist religion which led to the persecution of the Buddhists in North China. This was the

beginning of the division of the Taoist religion into north and south. In the north Chang Tao-ling does not have such an eminent place as in the south. Besides these two Taoist traditions, one in the south and the other in the north, there are other minor movements—the Mao Shan Tao and the Wu Tang Tao, for instance—which do not recognize the authority of Chang Tao-ling or that of K'ou Ch'ien-chih at all. Mao Shan Tao had its origin earlier than that of Chang Tao-ling in the second century A.D., going back perhaps to the time of the first emperor of the Ch'in dynasty in the third century B.C., according to a passage of Ssu-ma Ch'ien's historical writings.

### *Later Development of the Taoist Religion*

Through the centuries we find mutual borrowing and imitation between Taoism and Buddhism. In a previous chapter reference has already been made to the interpretation of Buddhist teaching in terms of Taoist philosophy towards the end of the third century A.D. Although here Taoism means Taoist philosophy and not the Taoist religion, it accounts for the many terms and expressions common to the two systems, as the Taoist religion borrows also from the Taoist philosophy. This process of mutual borrowing and imitation continued between the Taoist religion and Chinese Buddhism when Taoism became more and more a religious system with its own canonical literature, its own theology, its own

pantheon, and its own temples and religious organizations and practices. But Taoism has always been a heavier debtor to Buddhism than the latter to it.

In its struggle with Buddhism for supremacy, Taoism, being a native religion, resorted often to court intrigue which most of the time turned out to be in its favor when the word from the mouth of the emperor was law. Its heyday was in the T'ang dynasty. The surname of the T'ang Emperors was Li, and Taoism went back to Lao-tzu as its founder whose name, according to Ssu-ma Ch'ien, was also Li. The T'ang Emperors, therefore, claimed Lao-tzu as one of their direct ancestors and showed special favor to Taoism. In 667 A.D. the T'ang Emperor Kao Tsung honored Lao-tzu with the imperial title of *T'ai Shan Hsuan Yuen Huang Ti*, the Most High Mystical Emperor. In 737 A.D. the Emperor Hsüan-tsung ordered that the teaching of Taoism be put on the same footing as the Confucian classical learning and that the office of doctors of Taoism be established, making possible the recommendation of Taoist scholars for government appointments every year, a privilege hitherto enjoyed exclusively by the Confucian scholars since the second century B.C. From that time on, certain Taoist books have been known as "true classics."

During the Sung dynasty, from the tenth through the twelfth century A.D., Taoism had its period of prosperity. The Yüan emperors in the thirteenth century rather frowned upon Taoism. Imperial patronage for Taoism returned with the next dynasty, the Ming, for two cen-

turies and a half, but it suffered restrictions again under the Manchus. As a religion of the people, however, it continued to hold its own.||

### *The Taoist Religion Among the People*

It is well known that the religion of the Chinese people is a mixture of many elements. For most of the Chinese people religion has to do with the unseen which is largely unknown, and they do not have the desire to inquire too much into the unseen and the unknown; but for practical purposes they deem it expedient at least to play safe with all the religions; they would do the minimum for all religions. Certainly there is no harm in following this policy. Very few religions require exclusive allegiance. Unless a Chinese takes the vow to become a Buddhist monk or a Buddhist nun, or unless he becomes a Taoist priest by identifying himself with a Taoist temple and by taking ordination to the priesthood, neither Buddhism nor Taoism can be binding on him as far as his religious practice and allegiance are concerned. A man may patronize both religions at the same time without inviting religious censure from anybody. Confucianism is a culture, largely concerned with man's social, political, and moral duties. As long as these are performed in accordance with the established rules, his religious beliefs and practices are his private affair with which no one would wish to interfere. It is a mistake to

|| The author is much indebted to Fu Chin-chia's *History of Chinese Taoism* (in Chinese), for many suggestions in writing this section of this chapter.

call this Chinese religious tolerance; it is religious indifference. In the general outlook on life Buddhism and Taoism as religions are fundamentally incompatible. Buddhism regards individual existence as suffering subject to the law of *karma*, perpetually in the rounds of transmigration, the liberation from which is Nirvana which alone is true blissfulness and the only reality. Taoism as a religion is the search for the elixir of life, to prolong this individual existence of ours with all its enjoyments and privileges and powers, without, however, its limitations, its toils, and its responsibilities. But the ordinary Chinese cares little for these differences, still less for this fundamental incompatibility between the two religions. Confucianism attaches great importance to family life, and both Buddhism and Taoism have celibates, but celibacy is never considered an essential feature of the Buddhist or Taoist life. It is only an expedient measure. There is, therefore, no clash even between these two religions and the Confucian cultural system. When the Buddhist or Taoist assumes celibacy, he ceases to be a member of the family and thereby ceases to be a member of the community too. Then, Confucianism is no more interested in him. It is not true, therefore, to say that most of the Chinese are Confucianists, Buddhists, and Taoists at the same time. They *are* Confucianists. Many of them would take advantage of Buddhism and Taoism for whatever facilities they may offer in this life or in the next for themselves or for their deceased relatives and friends. The Taoists have their

religious literature, their temples, their celibates to perform services for the benefits of the dead as do the Buddhists, but besides, they have more gods, believe in many more spirits, touch more aspects of man's life, offer charms to cure different diseases, profess to exorcise evil spirits, practice divination, tell fortunes, communicate with the dead, stoop low enough even to enhance the sexual pleasures of man; they are more popular with the masses of the people, who have more demands for their services than for those of the Buddhist monks. As a whole, Buddhism gives the Chinese consolation but Taoism gives them sensuous satisfaction in many and various ways.

### *The Taoist Canon*

In literary production, however, the Taoist cannot rival the Buddhist. In the first place, Taoism does not have the rich and variegated philosophical tradition of Buddhism in India, which has served not only as an inspiration but has also compelled the Buddhist translators and writers to produce a new literature. On the other hand, the Taoist writers have such Taoist philosophical works as those of Lao-tzu and Chuang-tzu to serve as their models, but their instinct has been that of imitation rather than creation, imitation of Taoist philosophical writings and imitation of Buddhist literature. But imitation seldom produces anything great or really worthwhile.

In volume, however, the Taoist canon is quite the

equal of Buddhism. Its growth has been remarkable. What it lacks is profundity, not fecundity.

In the Han dynasty, that is before the third century A.D., Taoist works numbered 993 essays in 291 rolls. By the seventh century it had grown to 1,416 rolls, and by the twelfth century, to 3,706 rolls. Kubilai Khan of the Mongol dynasty was a patron of Buddhism at the expense of Chinese Taoism. In 1281 A.D. he ordered all the Taoist books, with the exception of the *Tao Tê ching*, to be burnt, along with the wooden blocks from which they were printed, because he regarded them all to be forgeries. This was a severe blow to the Taoist literature. How effectively this order was actually carried out it is difficult to tell. But the present Taoist canon, published in Shanghai in 1925, consists of 5,845 rolls in 1120 Chinese bound volumes. Much of this "literature" has been the product of the ouija board.

### *Taoist Temples and the Taoist Priesthood*

In China there are as many Taoist as there are Buddhist temples.

The Taoist temples are of two types: there are the *kuans*, *kuan* originally meaning "to look". It is said that a Han emperor, Wu Ti, built a temple where the genii might appear for him to look at. The larger temples are called *k'ungs* which means "palaces". These latter are usually elaborately built, similar in structure to a Buddhist temple, with a Taoist community of priests in it under an abbot.

Usually there is at least one Taoist priest in a smaller temple. This priest takes novices, who receive a Taoist name from him upon their initiation. They tie their hair into a knot over the top of their heads, put on the Taoist dress—robe, stockings, and shoes. Later, when they have been put through a course of training for about one year, they are presented by their own priest to the abbot of one of the larger temples who alone has the right to ordain the novices to the Taoist priesthood. Upon their ordination, the new priests are given their credentials which entitle them to the privileges of Taoist mendicants, to be received as such wherever they may find a Taoist temple.

These priests obey the five rules of a disciple, namely, not to take life, not to indulge in wine, not to use false language, not to steal, and not to commit adultery. They must practise the ten virtues—being filial to their parents, loyal to their emperor and teachers, kind-hearted to all living beings, self-restraining, admonitory to the evil-doer, self-sacrificing in relieving the poor and distressed, rescuing animals from being butchered and keeping them after rescue, promoting public welfare—such as planting trees and building bridges, removing whatever is harmful to man, and, finally, studying the Taoist canon and worshiping the Taoist deities.

The Taoist priests must recite constantly the Taoist classics, formulas, and lists of spirits and genii transmitted to them by their own masters. The mere recitation itself is supposed to have religious efficacy, some-

times understood to have magical power. Such classics and formulas and lists can be transmitted by master to disciple after the latter has been subjected to a rigorous course of discipline, fasting and purification. A vow must be taken upon the transmission not to reveal the secret or transmit it to another person without the greatest care. To do otherwise is sacrilegious.

How do these Taoist priests support themselves? They do it in various ways. Suffice it to mention a few.

First, they hold in their possession, transmitted secretly to them by their masters, certain lists of the names of deities, as we have just stated. The secret is given only with a fee. When a list is received, the recipient carries it on his body, and it has magical efficacy to protect the person from evil influences. .

Second, a Taoist priest writes the name of a person, the date and hour of his birth and other particulars, on a piece of paper in the form of an official memorial, (which was under the empire submitted by an official to the emperor), and reads it aloud in a religious service, usually held at midnight, to ward off ill fortune to the man for whom the service is held. A fee is paid to the officiating priest.

Third, the Taoist priests qualified to practise magic will have a wooden seal cut according to prescriptions, breathe into it and then place it over a sick person to cure him from all sorts of ailments. These priests practise as medicine men and as such they have their income.

Fourth, they are capable of summoning demons who obey their orders. People who feel that they are being troubled by certain demons go to the Taoist priests to get rid of these demons by paying a fee.

When we remember that the Taoist gods, genii, and other spiritual personages fill over 800 pages of Henry Doré's *Researches into Chinese Superstitions*, that all these spiritual beings have something to do with the people although not all are feared by them, and that the Taoist priests have the secret of access to them, then we see why the services of these priests are naturally very much in demand.

In the eyes of the simple folk their awe of the priests is very much enhanced by the kind of life they live. The priests are believed to know the secret of prolonging their own span of life by a mysterious kind of physical exercises. They imitate the movements of certain animals and birds, each movement having a peculiar name, which only adds to the mysterious character of the process. They are supposed to be able to conjure up a river on dry land by waving their hands over it, to call into existence a hill by piling a handful of earth on level ground, to cross a stream without a boat, to see what is underneath the ground and at an immense distance, to conceal their bodies from human sight by turning in one way and to appear within sight again by turning in another way; in other words to perform by magic, miracles beyond words and passing human understanding. They meditate in long periods of silence;

they know the secret of controlling their breath for the preservation of their vitality; they are in search of the elixir of life which some of them claim they have already found. The common people share these beliefs and consider their priests to be men of extraordinary virtues and powers, and for this reason hold them in awe. Both in its origin and in its practice in China, Taoism has had a demoralizing influence. The wonder is that it has persisted for eighteen hundred years among a people known for their common sense and for their lofty moral code. It is one of the extraordinary phenomena in the religious history of mankind. There is little doubt that Taoism is dying out in China, especially with the spread of modern education, but it may be a long time before it becomes entirely extinct.

### *The Chinese Almanac*

We can get a good idea of the popular religion in China by studying the Chinese almanac which is really more a religious calendar than an agricultural almanac. A very popular version of it, much used in the south of China, consists of three parts. The first may be regarded as an agricultural almanac. It gives the various dates when the farmer may expect a change of season and weather, probably embodying the experience of meteorological changes in the Yellow River valley and in the Honan plain for many centuries and applicable, therefore, only in part to other parts of China's extensive territory. People in other regions, however, inter-

pret the meteorological notes in terms of their local experience. This simply shows that the Chinese do not have a literal mind. These meteorological notes are expressed in the terms taken from that section of the *Book of Rites*, the *Li Chi*, entitled the *Yüeh Ling*, translated by James Legge as "Proceedings of Government in the Different Months".<sup>||</sup> Thus we find in that book such entries: "In the first month of spring . . . fishes rise up to the ice . . . There takes place the inauguration of spring." "In the first month of summer . . . there takes place the inauguration of summer." "In the second month of summer . . . cicadas begin to sing." And the farmer plans his work accordingly.\*

Another part of the almanac has to do with the lucky and unlucky days for various activities. This is distinctly Taoist in nature. Before anything is undertaken, from repairing a stove in the kitchen to the celebration of matrimony, the almanac must be consulted. It is the book most frequently used in a Chinese family and every family invests some money in a new copy for the new year well in advance.

<sup>||</sup> *Sacred Books of the East*, vol. 27, pp. 20-21, 249-310.

\* According to an eminent classical scholar, Lu Te-ming, writing in the seventh century of the Christian era, the *Yüeh Ling* was originally a part of the records of Lü Pu-wei, the *Lu Shi Chun Chin*, which is a collection of quasi-historical notices, bearing the name of Lü Pu-wei as its author but really compiled only under his patronage by an assemblage of scholars representing all schools of thought at the time. Lü died in the year 237 B. C. Who compiled the *Yüeh Ling* from this work to form a part of the *Li Chi* is unknown. There is marked Taoist influence in it, although it is in the *Li Chi* which has been regarded as one of the Confucian Classics since the second century B.C.

The third part of the almanac is really a calendar of religious festivals and feasts of the gods. In the Chinese lunar calendar there are, except in a leap year when there are thirteen months, 354 or 355 days. On 311 days there is some festival or feast of a god or both. On 144 of these days there are festivals, great and small, and on 230, feasts of the gods. The number of days in each month on which fall such religious celebrations ranges from 10 to 24 out of the 29 or 30 in the month. The mean number is 19. Taking the first six months in the year we find 191 feasts of the gods. Of these gods, 30 are Confucian, 31 Buddhist, and 130 Taoist. The predominating religious influence of Taoism in the Chinese almanac, and therefore among the Chinese people, cannot be doubted. Of course, not every Chinese person will pay attention to all the festivals and feasts of the gods. Each one will pick out those which he or she would observe; those days which are observed generally by the populace are very few.†

### *Religion in the Family*

It is impossible to find any old Chinese home, except those of the Mohammedans and the Christians—and those of the latter can rarely be called old—where there are not many gods. The gods found in the family vary from region to region. The Chinese are, generally speaking, very religious people. Their family and community

† For English readers, see Timothy Richard, *Calendar of the Gods in China*, Shanghai, 1906. Some of the views expressed in the Introduction are antiquated.

life fully vindicates this. People who speak of the Chinese people as being not religious have a strange conception of what religion is.

The ordinary house in the province of Kwangtung, for instance, is so built that in the main hall there is a shrine elevated about midway between the floor and the ceiling. Usually this shrine is divided into three parts. The central portion is for the ancestral tablets of the family, going back five generations counting from the last deceased head of the family. In the compartment to the left of the center, facing the door, are found the names of certain gods inscribed on a large wooden tablet or written on a piece of red paper. What these gods are depends upon the tradition in that particular family. Kuan-yin or Avalokitesvara, generally known in the West as the goddess of mercy, and Kuan Ti, erroneously called the Chinese god of war ‡ are usually among the five so-called "Great Gods". Hua Kuang, Hsüan Tan, and the god of wealth make up the rest of the five as a rule. Here in a family shrine we find deities representing Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism, all honored for qualities valued by the Chinese.

‡ Kuan Ti, or Kuan Yü, a hero idealized by the popular story book entitled *San Kuo Yen Yi*, dramatizing the history of the Three Kingdoms in the period of roughly 221-265, B.C. is honored by the Chinese not because of his military achievements, of which he had few, but mainly because of his loyalty to his prince and sworn-brother and his uprightness as a man. It is a gross mistake to call him "the god of war". The Chinese have never had such a god in their religious history. It is a pity that the error has gone into the literature written in the European languages by Westerners as well as by ill-informed Chinese, and it has stuck tenaciously.

These gods are worshipped on the seasonal festivals, such as the New Year Day, the Dragon Boat Festival on the 5th day of the 5th moon according to the lunar calendar; the Mid-Autumn Festival on the 15th day of the 8th moon, by the same calendar; on the day of the Winter solstice; and on the feast days of the gods in the family shrine. At new moon and full moon more incense is burnt and more oil poured into the lamps than on the ordinary days, but there is no special ceremony. The head of the family, if he is a man of special religious piety, will prostrate himself before the family shrine on such occasions. More often, however, the women folk simply display the food and wine and rice on a table in front of the shrine, light the lamps or candles and the incense, with perhaps a string of fire-crackers to mark the occasion, and that is all.

It is in the life cycle, however, that we find the religion of the Chinese family most in evidence. Not much by way of religious rite is performed on the birth of a child, for the family wants to be fairly sure that the child will live and therefore waits a few days; the celebration comes when the baby is a month old. It is then an occasion for thanksgiving as well as for feasting, and the receiving of presents from friends, relatives and neighbors. Eggs with the shell colored in red are sent to all who may be interested in the birth of the child. When the child is one year old, when it is sick, when the boy or girl is betrothed to marry, and when the wedding takes place, are always occasions for religious activities.

Whenever anything of significance happens to the family, even when there is a celebration of the anniversary of a birthday, the dead ancestors are informed, for they are still concerned and interested though unseen. The gods must be honored and their help solicited. A funeral is a religious affair. The spirits that may have thronged the house when death came must be sent away with the assistance of the patron gods of the family, and the journey of the newly deceased to the other world must be made easy and safe. How can anyone infer that the Chinese are not religious?

### *The Religious Life of the Local Community*

Outside the family circle the Chinese live most intimately in the local community, which is usually a village or a small town where everyone knows everyone else. If the town is too large for such intimate social relationships, or if it is a large city, the populace is divided into neighborhood communities in which people may share in some kind of common life.

In every community, large or small, there are temples of various gods. There is almost invariably the temple of Kuan Ti, one of Kuan-yin, one of the god of wealth, perhaps one of Hsüan Tan, a Taoist god whose function is to ward off the evil spirits from the locality. T'u Ti or the local deity usually has no temple; he has to be content with a humble little shrine on the roadside or a structure of rough stones at the corner of a street. There are temples of deities peculiar to that locality,

and temples may have been built to local heroes of the past. There are, of course, the Buddhist and Taoist temples where the Buddhist monks or the Taoist priests have their abode, but they are as a rule on a hill top, on the side of a mountain, or in some woody spot away from the community. To these temples people go for pilgrimage and for worship on special occasions. Temples of the god of literature, of the god of the eastern mountain, of the jade emperor and of Ch'êng Huang, are found only in the capital city of the province, or perhaps in the district city. Ancestral temples are found everywhere but they belong to a different category, being considered a part of the clan structure rather than as religious temples.

Every year, when the feast of the god in a popular temple comes round, the local community raises enough funds to present theatricals on a stage built in the space in front of the temple. No admission fee is charged, because the show is for the enjoyment of the people as well as for the honor of the god. A large number of people will gather, not only from the local community but from neighboring communities as well. It is a time for social intercourse and exchange of good will, as well as relaxation and merry-making. The New Year, the Dragon Boat Festival, and the Mid-Autumn Festival are generally celebrated in the same way. The country folk in China have no holidays on Sundays. Their time for relaxation must be made up by these festivals and feasts of the gods. For many it is not just so many holidays.

They get a real religious feeling out of it all. Look at the people dressed in their best, men and women, old and young, incense sticks in their hands, all flocking to the temple to do the god honor. Religion means something to them. And they are willing to pay the expenses too.

### *How Are the Religious Ideas Disseminated?*

The people pay the expenses of maintaining the temples, defraying the cost of the incense and the candles burnt, the theatricals performed, very often for more than one day, and the feasting that is always a feature of the occasion. In raising the funds they talk about their god, what he did in the past and what he still means to the people. The theatricals dramatize the divine history. The idol in the temple characterizes him. The tablets and the scrolls call to mind his traits and his relation to the people. These are the materials and the methods of religious education in China. There is sometimes storytelling. But this is not formal; it is rather casual, one man talking to another at the feast they are participating in, or in the temple, or while they are walking along the path to the place of worship. The religious ideas are more often instilled into the mind by what the people see in the temple, by the proverbs and common sayings current in the everyday language of the people, and by what they read in the story books which were originally intended for amusement rather than for religious instruction.

In the popular literature of the Chinese there are a

number of story books which have in the ages past exerted great influence upon the religious thinking of the Chinese masses. I quote briefly what I have written in another connection on a very popular collection of short stories called the *Liao Chai Wonder Stories*.

Although it is exaggerating to say that "the porter . . . the boatman . . . and the chair-coolie . . . no less than the man of letters . . . may be seen poring with delight over the elegantly narrated marvels of the *Liao Chai*,"\* yet it is certainly true that no Chinese who reads intelligently at all can possibly remain ignorant of this wonderful collection of fascinating short stories. For our present purpose, the work is important, not for its elegant style or its place in the history of Chinese literature, but for the fact that it reflects vividly and faithfully some of the popular beliefs and convictions characteristic of the average Chinese. The stories are chiefly about the unseen and the supernatural, not entirely according to the author's conception of those matters, but to a large extent according to the thinking of the people for whom he was writing. Most of them were not the author's own stories: "I am rather animated," writes P'u Sung-ling, the author, in the preface, "by the spirit of Su Tung-p'o who loved to hear men speak of the supernatural. I get people to commit what they tell me to writing and subsequently I dress it up in the form of a story; and thus in the lapse of time my friends

\* H. A. Giles, *Strange Stories from a Chinese Studio*, vol. 1, p. XXXI, 2 vols. London, 1880.

from all quarters have supplied me with quantities of material."

Of the different types of stories told in the *Liao Chai*, three classes are the most numerous.† The first of these three classes is intended to illustrate the operation of the principle of retributive justice, the second class tells of the departed spirits with their abodes underground, and the third is made up of narratives of were-foxes and of spirits of flowers and trees.

Retributive justice is certainly one of the most ancient and the most fundamental religious concepts of the Chinese. That the good or their descendants will receive rewards and the evil, punishments, is a deeply rooted conviction ever since very ancient times. The virtuous man may live and die in suffering and disgrace, his posterity will reap the reward of his merits. The remarkable thing is that this conviction has survived all the hard experience of life, never shaken as it was among the Jews. The Book of Job has no counterpart in Chinese literature. Every tragedy ends in the vindication of the good and the chastisement of the evil. The Indian idea of transmigration of souls introduced into China through Buddhism makes the problem simpler and removes some of the practical difficulties involved in retributive justice. But it is the Confucian notion of retribution that has prepared the soil for the Indian doctrine of *karma* and thus smooths the way for the introduction of Buddhism.

†Giles has not translated all the stories.

The Chinese idea of the departed spirits as believed by the popular mind and recorded in the *Liao Chai* stories is that after death the soul goes to an underground world where it will stay until the time of its next transmigration, which is determined by the infernal authorities according to a calculation of merits and demerits. These departed spirits may revisit this world and even enter into intimate relationships with the living. A ghost mistress is the subject of more than one story in the *Liao Chai*. As a rule these spirits who return are rather friendly, not more to be dreaded than human beings, if they are properly treated. Ghosts have to obey the universal principles of morality and of social decency as much as men. They, too, have to respect fate and can no more interfere with the deserts of men according to their deeds than we can. They may be bribed in the performance of their duties as human public officials can be, but are not immune from the consequences. They may show their gratitude for kindness received and are permitted to become agencies for redressing their own grievances, but only within limits set up by the accepted principles of justice. In other words, a ghost can harm an enemy only in equitable revenge and can help a friend only insofar as he deserves help. In short, the Confucian moral code applies in the underground world as it does with us in this.

The stories of the werefoxes constitute a special feature of the *Liao Chai*. It is a common belief among the Chinese, particularly in the northern provinces, that

foxes by pursuing a certain method of spiritual cultivation could acquire the power of assuming human forms at will, and in this way enter into relationships with human beings. Sometimes these werefoxes would be rather mischievous and play all sorts of mean tricks upon men. But as a rule they are amenable to reason and are subject to the same feelings and affections as we ordinarily are. Other species of animals and even plants may acquire the same power as the foxes. Very often they mingle with men in society and enjoy their company and friendship. Such, then, is the popular belief.

This kind of belief is basic with the Taoists. For them the world is fundamentally one. The same *tao* or principle pervades the whole universe. While man is the culmination of all forms of existence within the realm of nature, there is no impassable barrier between him and the other creatures. Further, the lower animals as well as man are capable of transcending the limitations of their particular form of existence. When this is achieved, they become immortals, free from all the bounds of nature. But as immortals they are not to be non-moral. The same moral principles are still binding upon them, even upon the lower animals as soon as they have transcended the line of their own species and entered into the realm of spirits. Indeed, only by developing morally are they able to make spiritual progress. An immoral act, however seemingly insignificant, will surely mean a serious setback to the elixir-seeker in the search for the

life of absolute and ever-lasting freedom and bliss. A grave offence may annul all the achievements and necessitate a fresh start from the bottom again. Morality is all-important in Chinese religion, even as it is popularly conceived. We would suggest that this moral emphasis is due to the wholesome influence of the Confucian tradition.

It is owing to the influence of the Confucian tradition, too, that Taoism with all its fantastic ideas has not led to fanaticism in thought or practice. Both as a modifying factor and as a sobering influence, the Confucian tradition exerts itself in the domain of the real religion of the masses in China.

## 6

INTERPRETATION OF CHRISTIANITY IN  
TERMS OF CHINESE CULTURE*Chinese Culture Confronting the Christian Church*

THE Christian Church in China is confronted with a culture which is the product of a long historical development and is deeply rooted in the soil of the country. It has all the characteristics by which the Chinese people are known. It is practical. Its arts are arts for the everyday enjoyment of the people. Its philosophy is predominantly ethical and political rather than metaphysical and epistemological. The emotional side of life is not neglected, but the man of culture, the true gentleman in China, is the man who can bring his emotions under the control of reason. He must not be excitable. In every situation he must remain calm, serene, and self-composed. He may not be able to change his circumstances; he may not even seek to change them. But he must not allow the changing circumstances to master him. He must be his own master, and he knows that this is possible only when his inner self has been cultivated and disciplined.

The average Chinese is open to the suggestion of new ideas. But his first reaction to a new idea is apt to be that of skeptical reservation. He would want to check it

with experience, either his own or that of the nation. Yet he is not stubbornly conservative. When the old idea fails to produce results, he would try a new one. He is a pragmatist, but only in practical matters, not in philosophy.

Life for him is life in society. He knows nothing about the individual in the abstract. Abstract problems can attract little of his attention. For this reason, he is not prone to radicalism or fanaticism of any sort. He is more apt to choose and follow the middle-path. He would play safe.

His religion is also a practical and social affair. As such it is subject to community control, more in its outward expression than in its thinking and teaching. The religious life of the Chinese has little organization except as an integral part of the social structure and hardly distinguishable from it. Because Buddhism and Taoism as religions take the individual out of society, religious beliefs are regarded as private personal preferences beyond the purview of the community. The moment, however, such beliefs affect the social life or the duties of the individual in society, the state or the community considers it right to interfere.

### *The Proper Missionary Attitude Towards Chinese Culture*

In order that the Christian missionary enterprise may succeed in China, it is of paramount importance that it should assume the right attitude towards the culture of

the Chinese. Destructive criticism only antagonizes. Let us hope that this kind of attitude is already out of date. Up to about forty years ago it was common among the missionaries in China who studied the Chinese classics to criticize these teachings, to make observations on the Chinese customs, and to ridicule them. The consequence was that the Chinese who were won to Christianity were largely Chinese who knew little of the Chinese classical learning or who would value a bowl of rice more than their ancestral culture.

Nor would we recommend the comparative method. Comparison takes cultural elements out of their context and misrepresents them. Cultural elements are like features of the human face. When any facial feature is singled out it may easily become a caricature. This does not mean, however, that we are not interested in certain points of resemblance. But such points are useful only as the points of first contact and we must use them with the greatest caution. The same term may be found in two religious systems but has a different meaning in each. The term *I* in Confucian ethics, for instance, is often translated as *righteousness*, and *righteousness* in "the Kingdom of God and his righteousness" appears as *I* in the Chinese Bible, but there is a world of difference between the two ideas. To explain this difference would mean a careful exposition of Confucian ethics on the one hand and of Christian theology on the other.

There are also points of contrast between Christianity and Chinese religious and ethical teachings. To cite one

instance Chinese culture is fundamentally humanistic. It does not follow from this that the supernatural elements are to be slighted in our presentation of the Christian message to the Chinese. They may need just that which is lacking or weak in their own culture.

### *Certain Important Points in the Method of Presentation*

It ought to be borne in mind that the Christianity we seek to present to the Chinese is many-sided. Different groups of Christians differ in the type of service emphasized—as well as in the theology taught; in the form of worship—as well as in the conception of the Church. Let us not go to China to criticize each other or refer to each other in disparaging language, as if we represented different groups. We must learn not only to tolerate each other's differences but also to respect each other's peculiarities. It is unfortunate that the Church is divided while the Body of Christ should be one. But it is not the divided Church that has kept some of the Chinese away from it. There have been sects among the Buddhists and Taoists in China, and there have been schools even among the Confucianists. The astonishing thing to the Chinese is that the Christians do not respect each other when there is really so much spiritual unity among them, even though there may be denominational differences. It is denominationalism rather than denominations that has been a hindrance to the Christian enterprise in China.

Far be it from us to feel complacent about the divided Church. We long for the day when the Church may be one. But unity must not mean uniformity. Uniformity would be fatal to the Christian movement. If the history of Buddhism in China has taught us any lesson at all, it is the fact that variety in its presentation has been its greatest surviving value. No one in the early centuries of Buddhism in China could possibly have forecast that the Buddhist sects destined to survive would be the ones still in existence in the country today. Let us not be dogmatic, then, in deciding that only certain forms of Christianity should be sent to China. The Chinese may find certain forms congenial to their spirit even though we do not happen to approve them ourselves.

We have to recognize the fact also that Christianity is going to China from the West and that the West is not whole-heartedly Christian yet. It may be the duty of the missionary to make a candid analysis of Western culture, or varieties of it, and admit frankly some of the elements in it as being un-Christian. As Frank Rawlinson has put it, "The 'Christian' West has no solutions to offer to China as to the social snarls of race prejudice, war, narcotic addiction, industrial discontent, or the stabilization of family life." ‡ It is, however, not because the West is already Christian that Christian missionaries go from the Western countries to China; it is because these missionaries realize that the Chinese need Chris-

‡ Frank Rawlinson, *Naturalization of Christianity in China*, Shanghai, 1927, p. 6.

tianity as much as people in the West that they are impelled to go. It has to be carefully pointed out to the Chinese that unless more Chinese and more people of all the other nations in the world accept Christianity and demonstrate to one another how to give a fuller expression to their common Christian faith, Christianity in no nation in the world can find a full expression. It is because the Christian believes that the Christian Church needs all people in the world, as much as all people in the world need the Christian faith, that the world-wide Christian missionary movement is supported and kept going. When this is explained and understood in China the missionary movement will no longer be regarded as Western arrogance and presumptuousness, and the missionary will not be considered as exercising his prerogative of making known what he has in himself and what others lack, but as doing his duty in seeking for a more adequate expression for the Faith which is intended for the whole of mankind, because all share in the same human needs.

### *The Church in China—The Four-centre Church*

We have already indicated our hope that the Christian Church with all its rich heritage from the past, its variety in the form of worship, in polity, in faith and order, in life and work, may be presented to the Chinese for them to choose and to adapt to their own needs in their Christian growth and development. What the

future will bring according to the spiritual genius of the people is entirely unpredictable.

We would like to suggest, however, some methods by which Christians in China might adapt to their Christian community living some features of their age-long social structure and some elements of their religious heritage.

The social genius of the Chinese is to be found in the small compact community of intimate personal relationships. It is this intimate social contact that generates the sentiments which cement the group together and give it the sense of solidarity. Sometimes it is the village, sometimes the clan, and very often it is just the neighborhood.

We have to remember that the Christian group will be a small minority in a non-Christian community. Care must be taken to make it possible for such a group to have as much social contact as possible, centred around Christian worship. We call this group the church cell. It should not be large in membership. Perhaps there should be only about one hundred adult members, certainly not more than one hundred and fifty, in approximately thirty to fifty families.

While the church cell is the centre of worship for the people, a church building is not essential to such a cell. The Christians will worship and have their religious meetings in one of the larger houses, of which there may be some in a group like this. Or they may make use of a

temple, or some sort of public place. A church building will be erected only when the cell is strong enough financially to do that and to maintain it without any help from outside the group. When this is built, it should be of the architectural style of local ancestral temples, inexpensive in capital outlay and for maintenance. It will serve as the social centre of the cell as well as a place of worship for that cell. All the social activities of the members ought to be centred around it. There the members will have their entertainments, for people from outside the group as well as for each other. It is a clubhouse as well as a church. There ought to be a family atmosphere in it. It is a place to which people would love to go and go naturally. There they meet God and there they meet their friends.

The cell has no paid ministers. Some of the members ought to have sufficient training to do the work which a minister of the Church usually does. They do it voluntarily in their leisure hours. Two or three voluntary workers may divide the work among themselves. As to their training more will be said later. In order that the cell may be religiously and spiritually alive, ways and means must be found, as we believe they can be found, for as many of the members as possible to get the necessary training and experience and that frequently, and not just once and for all.

Some of the members doing the ministerial work will seek ordination and will be properly ordained according to the practice of the Church to which the cell belongs.

They do the work as volunteers by the general consent of the members of the cell. Their ecclesiastical status, however, will be determined according to the polity of the Church of which the cell is a part. There should be no rule, however, against a cell having a full-time paid minister, if such a paid minister is considered necessary and the cell is able to support him. But this should be the exception rather than the rule in the life of the church cell. A minister of religion with a salary regularly paid to him by the community is an institution entirely new to the Chinese, and for many years to come the young Church in China will not be able to bear the burden.

A number of cells in a certain area will contribute towards the support of a centre of Christian social service, the second centre which we would like to see in the Christian life in China. This centre transcends differences of Church polity. It will be "inter-denominational". It is the centre through which Christian life will reach outwards by service towards the surrounding community, largely non-Christian. Its services may take the form of a reading room, a mass-education centre, a clinic, or a school, or all these and others, according to the needs of the community. Workers are paid, although some of them may be voluntary and part-time. This centre of Christian social service does not need to be entirely supported by the cells sponsoring it. It may receive contributions from other sources but only to such an extent as not to jeopardize its Christian motive and

character. It may cooperate with neighboring centres of similar character. One of the dangers it must avoid is getting stereotyped, believing that certain things must be done regardless of local needs, or becoming a cog in a complicated organization which will take the life out of it by killing its initiative. It must be a genuine expression of the spirit of service of the sponsoring cells and it must be always sensitive to local needs.

We have in China the Christian colleges, which ought to be the centres of Christian thinking. These seats of Christian learning must be academically as strong as any other seat of learning in the country. They are the places where Christian scholars will find a congenial atmosphere in which to do their corporate thinking, not only on problems concerning the life and work of the Church but also on problems confronting society, the state and the world. The greatest temptation of the Christian college is secularization, to be interested just in things which interest any other institution of higher education, without approaching the problems from the Christian point of view. The Christian seat of learning is not to be content with being only a seat of Christian learning. It must be a seat of all learning with a Christian emphasis.

These Christian centres of learning must be articulated with the Christian movement in the whole country and particularly with the Christian Church in its own region. It must hold the intellectual front of the Chris-

tians and ought to keep the Christians intellectually alive and alert all the time. What the research science laboratories in the universities are to many of the industrial establishments in a modern state, the Christian seat of learning in China ought to be to the Christian movement in the country in general and to the local Churches in its own region in particular. Unless this is true, the Christian college in China will have failed in its most important function, that is to be the centre of Christian thinking.

There are, therefore, first the Church cell which is the centre of the people's worship for Christian nurture; second, the centre of Christian social service for Christian life to reach outwards; and, third, the Christian seat of learning, i.e., the centre of Christian thinking to keep the Church intellectually alive and alert—these three. And there must be the fourth, the centre of Christian pilgrimage.

Pilgrimage is a great religious institution. Through it people in the Orient find one of the best and most natural expressions of their religious genius and in it their religious sentiments have one of their best outlets. The Chinese Buddhists and Taoists have their sacred mountains and many other beautiful spots where the famous temples stand. To these places as their spiritual homes the religious people flock. There they get their religious inspiration. There they receive their religious education, and there they have their spiritual satisfaction and rest. To these places people often go seeking pleasure

and recreation but come away with a glimpse of what religion is in spite of themselves.

And not only the Buddhists and the Taoists but also the more secular-minded Confucianists have their centres of pilgrimage. It is not only the place of nativity and the tomb of Confucius in Shantung, but also the ancient tombs of the great emperors and founders of the dynasties and the places sacred to the national and local heroes which attract large numbers of Chinese who wish to drink deeply at the fountains of the culture of their ancestors. Every clan has its ancestral tombs and temples to which the devout descendants after long sojourns in distant parts would return with pious sentiments and feel the anchorage of their lives rooted there.

Should not the Chinese Christians have their centres of pilgrimage as well? Can we not have such a centre wherever there are a sufficient number of Christians to maintain one, to which Christians from other places may also come either as pilgrims or only as travelers in transit? We may start with just a few at first, and if they should meet a real need more may be built up in course of time until the country is dotted with them, perhaps one within the reach of three or four districts which correspond to the counties in the United States or Great Britain. Eventually, there may be hundreds of them in the whole country.

Such a centre of Christian pilgrimage ought to be situated on a hill top surrounded by beautiful shade trees or in a woody spot a few miles away from a popu-

lous city. The estate on which it is built should be spacious enough from the start so that if the city should later grow around it, it would still keep its quiet and calm and be a place of religious recreation and retreat.

It is here and not in the city that we would build the "cathedral", the most beautiful church in the district. Adjacent would be a cemetery where the leading Christians are buried, and they are buried there only by the popular consent of the Christians representing the surrounding cells. There must be a Christian hotel where Christians may stay by paying just the expenses. There must be a library of devotional literature, books on other religious subjects being found in the Christian college. Last, but not least, there should be a museum of the relics of the famous Christian men and women who belong to that district by birth or who have worked there and contributed to the Christian life.

In this way we build up a Christian shrine to which we hope the Chinese sentiments at present centred around the clan may be gradually transferred, because the spiritual ancestors of the Christians are commemorated there. On the great Christian festivals, Easter and Christmas, and on other festivals to be taken over by the Church and Christianized, there will be religious plays, story-telling, exhibits, fairs, torch-light processions, and what not, to attract the Christians and others for their edification as well as for their recreation. Religious meetings and gatherings will be held there, of course; it will serve as a place of retreat, a resort for

religious recreation, a Christian ashram, to use the Hindu term.

The minister in charge of the cathedral church and the whole establishment connected with it must be a spiritual leader of at least middle age. A young man, however brilliant and learned he may be, cannot fill the position. Even new China still has the traditional respect for age. This minister ought to be known for his devotional life as well as for his ecclesiastical learning. He will be assisted by a small but efficient staff to look after the business side of his work so that he may be free from the deadening burden of finance and routine. From time to time he will conduct short periods of retreat to enrich the devotional experience of a group of lay people, men and women, who have similar short courses of training in the Bible, Church history, Christian teachings, and other subjects in the Christian college. Such retreats and courses of training will be held periodically to prepare church leaders for the church cells. From among these people will emerge the voluntary ministers and church workers to whom we have referred.

With a spiritual leader in charge of the centre of pilgrimage we hope to be able to attract to it men of business, of politics, of world affairs, for a few days of quiet leisurely devotion. In the serene environment we may get the Christian men in all walks of life to face, in the presence of God and with the help of an experienced minister, their Christian duties and to realize that they are shouldering their heavy public responsibilities.

with the support of the prayers and sympathy of their fellow-Christians in the Church, by which they are constantly remembered as its sons. In such an environment it may be easier to say to such people some of the hard things which cannot be said when we go to see them in their offices or their homes. The Church owes to them the sacred duty of fatherly admonition and friendly advice to supplement the less personal preaching from the pulpit. Some of this work has to be done in the church cell, of course, where the more personal relationship exists, but some of it is possible only when we get away for a while from the bustle of life.

As far as denominational connection is concerned, we envisage the possibility of the church cells maintaining the church affiliation most natural to each group. By no means should our church organization in China lead to the formation of a new denomination. The centre of Christian social service and the Christian college must be inter-denominational. In these two centres Christians work together and learn to respect and love one another more. The centre of pilgrimage may have its denominational allegiance as far as its cathedral church and the appointment of its minister in charge are concerned. But its services and facilities ought to be extended to all Christians.

This implies the adoption by all Churches of the principle of open Communion. We see no reason, especially in China, why this should not be done. Looking at the situation of the relation between the Churches quite ob-

jectively and as Christians with deep devotion to their own Church but without any prejudices, we would compare two kinds of privilege in the Church with the civil rights and political rights in the nation. For instance, as a citizen of the Republic of China sojourning temporarily in another civilized country, I am accorded all the civil rights which are essential to my existence and for my comfort, the right to all the human liberties under the law of the land, the right to the public facilities such as postal service, police protection of life and property, the right to use water, electricity and the means of transportation, etc. But as an alien I do not enjoy the political rights, such as the right to vote on government issues and the right to elect public officials and to be eligible to election. Why should we not, then, recognize the baptism of all Christians which is the beginning of our spiritual life, and the privilege to participate in Communion which is essential to our spiritual growth? Churches ought to accord to the members of each other these rights, reserving, however, to their own respective members the rights of membership which have to do only with the government of the Church. Interchange of pulpits ought to be quite in order, while the ministration of the sacraments should be limited to the ordained ministers in their own Churches or in Churches fully in Communion with their own. As far as Church polity is concerned we recognize the differences, for until Churches are united they are separate and different

although they worship the same God, follow the same Master, accept as authoritative the same Bible, and have the same baptism. It serves little purpose to gloss over their separation and differences, much as we may deplore them. The first step towards Church unity is not to force Churches to come together before they can do so naturally. The first step is to get them to work together wherever and whenever they can, and by working together they will understand each other, and when they understand each other they will learn to respect and love each other. Only when they respect and love each other, can Church union be of any spiritual significance and lasting value. The non-Christian world is not surprised that we worship in different ways and that we have different forms of Church government, for it is human to be different. But it despises us when we followers of the same Master are not spiritually one and do not love or even respect one another.

We have, therefore, the church cell as the centre of Christian worship to foster a real fellowship feeling in a small compact community as the smallest unit of our Church organization. Christian morality will be based on personal relationships, as Confucian morality is so based, but it will have a broader foundation when it rests on the brotherhood of men derived from the teaching of the fatherhood of God, and when we live by the principle that we are members one of another and therefore ought to bear one another's burdens. The in-

timate living in a small Christian community will help to foster this sentiment and give expression to it more readily.

Moral teaching will take the form of personal admonition rather than preaching in terms of generalities. This becomes more possible when the church minister holds his position, not because of the academic training he has received and the degree he holds, but because of his age, experience, and his recognized standing in the community.

Care is taken, however, that this feeling of fellowship and community solidarity is not confined to the cell. Every Christian must be taught to feel that the cell is only a cell in the Body of Christ which is His Church transcending all limits of denomination, class, nation, race, time and space. The Chinese conception of the family as including all the living and the dead, bound together by the family tie, is to be enriched by the larger conception of the family of God. The teaching of the communion of saints ought to receive greater attention and to have a more significant place in the Church in China.

### ***Doctrinal Presentation of Christianity***

Through the four-centre Church we seek to develop Christian living among the Chinese and present Christianity to them in a concrete form. It is the Church that will stand as the Christian witness among the Chinese people, who for many years to come will remain

predominantly non-Christian. Christianity will be judged by the life and work of the Church even more than by the living and thinking of the individual Christians.

The Church lives by its faith in God. Its God is the maker of all things and the judge of all men. We know Him as the maker through the study of His handiwork in nature, and we know Him as the judge through the study of the history of peoples. Through nature and through history He has sought to reveal Himself, to speak to man. His self-revelation culminates in the incarnation of His Word in the person of Jesus of Nazareth, whose life and teaching have taught us that God is not only the creator and sustainer of the universe and the judge of nations in history, but that He is, above all, the Father of all men. He has taught the Fatherhood of God not by His preaching alone but particularly by His living—by living as the obedient Son of God who knows intimately His Father's heart and mind. He lived and died in filial obedience and He conquered death as the Son of the living God, who was able to break all the chains that hold the children of God under bondage because they submit themselves to sin. When men accept Jesus as their master they learn the secret of living as children of God from the revelation of the Divine Sonship of Jesus, and they are henceforth free from the self-seeking egotism which sets up the middle wall of partition between man and man, and they are reconciled to one another through their reconciliation to their Father. They will enjoy once more

their birth-right of perfect liberty as members of God's family, as brothers to one another, acknowledging as their common Father the creator of the universe which is their Father's house and in which they have nothing to fear as everything is for their enjoyment and felicity. As head of the great family embracing the whole of mankind, God exercises His will as the supreme authority. Man's duty is to submit to this will. When all men knit their wills together in His will and all their spirits in His spirit, love will prevail everywhere and love will fulfil the Divine law, not as law any longer, but as love. Then God's will will be done and His reign will be on earth.

Can we present this Christian truth to the Chinese in language intelligible to them? From their Confucian culture they will find it easy to understand the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man. They can easily understand the majesty and authority and loving kindness of the Father. They know what it means to submit to the Father's will and make it their own. When they are told that there is a Will in the universe and that there is a Purpose in history, they will readily grasp its meaning. While they believe in the inner light within the human heart, it is not strange to them that the mysteries of life are revealed to them in the lives of great historical personages who are the spiritual geniuses of the race. The Chinese have never been taught that great truths are communicated mechanically to passive

minds. Their historic sense has come from their age-long tradition that discernment of purpose in history is possible only to persons constantly in search of divine light in historical events and movements.

To the Chinese God is indeed a judge, not a father, still less a father always ready to forgive the prodigal son when he returns home penitent. But Buddhism, particularly the Ch'an Buddhism, has taught them that by turning one's life in the right direction and by forsaking the mistaken past a new start on the right path becomes instantly possible. All that is necessary is for Christianity to bring in the new idea of man's personal relationship with God, for personal relationship as the basis of life is the familiar Chinese way of thinking.

The Chinese classical Shang-ti is a deity of strict justice. It would be difficult for the Chinese to accept the teaching of the master of the vineyard paying his workers the same wages without reference to the length of their working time. The common sense of the "natural man" in the Chinese would emphasize justice more than love. Salvation by faith rather than by works would be a hard teaching to the Chinese. But they have accepted the Buddhism of the Pure Land sect which is the most popular sect of Buddhism in China today, and which teaches that turning to Buddha Amitâbha in faith is the only requisite to being born into the Pure Land after death. Birth into the Pure Land is, in other words, a gift from Buddha Amitâbha rather than a

reward earned by moral endeavor. The soil is therefore ready in China for the Christian doctrine of the divine grace.

God as creator as well as ruler of the universe is new to the Chinese mind, as many other Christian teachings are naturally new to the Chinese. But Shang-ti is the fountain of man's moral sense. From Shang-ti man receives his moral sentiments. Why should he not receive everything else from God?

There is a strong element of humanism in the Chinese moral and religious teachings, but there is no Chinese teaching that man is the measure of good and evil. The standard of the good and of the true is higher than man. It is the cosmic harmony according to Confucianism. Put the Christian God in the place of *ch'eng*, which we have proposed to translate as Cosmic Harmony, and the framework of the Confucian moral and religious philosophy may keep its old form but its spirit will be changed; it will have a new life.

Like the Hebrews the Chinese would be more interested in what God does in history and in His relation to man than in God's essence, in the moral attributes of God rather than in His metaphysical attributes. This is a weakness of the Chinese mentality. On account of this the metaphysical foundation of the Confucian ethics has never been strong. Because of this the more metaphysical sects of Buddhism have not succeeded long in holding the allegiance of the Chinese. For this reason we may expect the theological development of Christianity in

China to be along the historical and moral rather than the speculative line. But after all, Christianity is fundamentally historical and moral, not speculative, although we admit that knowledge of the divine acts must lead us on to at least a partial knowledge of the divine essence. We must not be surprised, however, if the Chinese will not be led very far in that direction.

Similarly, we may well expect the Chinese to be more attracted by the moral theory than by the objective theory of the Atonement. It is difficult to say whether it is natural for the Chinese to have a keen sense of sin or not. Modesty is one of their virtues, but to be modest is not necessarily to be aware of sin. All moral teaching, however, emphasizes human shortcomings, which lie in the weakness of the human will. At least we may say that sin for the Chinese is not so much an existential fact as a failure of the will. It is moral in nature rather than metaphysical. But our concern in presenting Christianity to the Chinese is not to present to them any theory of sin or of atonement, but to put them in touch with the atoning life of Christ, and let them feel their sin and their redemption from it through Christ. When they have had that experience, we may safely leave the theorizing part of it to the future Chinese theologians. It is the experience and not the theory that is important.

With regard to the doctrine of the Incarnation, we have to begin with the nature of God, God who from the beginning has been wanting to communicate Himself

to man, to speak to man, to make His will known to the world. His self-revelation culminates in the person of Jesus of Nazareth. There is a danger in presenting bluntly to the Chinese the teaching that God at a certain time assumed human form and walked the earth. In a way it is easy for the Chinese to understand that. There have been Chinese stories that certain gods did that, stories similar to the Greek legends. But such stories tell about a god assuming human form either to deceive men or to overawe them, not to reveal the very nature of the god who in his nature must reveal himself in human form, as the highest revelation to man must be in and through human personality. Some of the Chinese stories tell about a god assuming human form, because he had offended a higher god in heaven and therefore must come down to earth and be incarnated in man as his penalty—by which he might redeem himself before he could ascend into heaven again. If the Chinese should understand the Christian doctrine of the Incarnation in any of these ways, it would be disastrous. Therefore, we should not begin the teaching of the Incarnation with “The Word was made flesh,” but with “In the beginning was the Word.” When this Johannine doctrine is properly taught and understood the Christian conclusion that “He was made man” becomes inevitable. And we would not emphasize unduly the literal meaning of the word “Incarnation”, because in China there is not the gnostic background to militate against, as among the Gentile Christians in the first century. For the Chinese

there is no unbridgeable gulf between the heavenly and the human. They have been familiar with the idea that the two belong together, and it would be quite intelligible to them, too, that the human is at its best only when it is one with the Divine. The important point is to tell them the good news of the Divine and the human having actually become one, "without confusion, without change, without division, without separation." Should we bring into our interpretation of Christianity to the Chinese the actual wording of the Chalcedonian formula? No. But we shall probably be surprised that the Chinese with their cultural background will puzzle less over the doctrine of the Person of Christ than theologians in the West because their thinking has been more in terms of the spirit and of the will. But again let us remember that our concern is not so much the explanation of a doctrine to the Chinese as to put them in touch with the Divine Life in Jesus of Nazareth.

The Confucian Classics teach that on the bathing tub of one of the ancient sage-kings these words were engraved: "If you can daily renovate yourself, you must keep on doing so from day to day. Yea, let there be daily renovation." But the Chinese have found it difficult. It will be especially good tidings to them that men have not been left comfortless in their moral struggle. There will be not only the Spirit of Truth to guide them into all truth, but the Spirit of Life will enter into their lives to create in them a new life, only if they will receive the Lord of Life into their hearts, as has been the

experience of many men and women in all places and at all times. For the Chinese who believe it possible to appropriate in their individual lives the cosmic virtue, so as to participate even in the ceaseless creative process of the cosmos, it should not be hard to understand the doctrine of the Holy Spirit—that God dwells in man and in society, renovating daily the life of man and of society so as to make them conform more and more to His own likeness. This is so congenial to the Chinese moral experience that it is not extravagant to hope that the Church in China may in due time make a special contribution to the understanding of the Third Person in the Godhead.

Each of the main Christian doctrines may be presented to the Chinese by finding first some favorable point of contact, by making use of every element that is congenial, taking care to avoid any possibility of misunderstanding, and thus leading them into greater truth than is in their own culture. This method will awaken in them through Christian experience of God's grace the consciousness that "in Christ are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." These treasures do not contradict the best in their own traditional moral and religious teaching but surpass it by fulfilling it—that is by filling it to the fullest extent, so that when they come to realize this they are impelled one and all to lay down at the throne of the Lamb that is slain their inheritance from the past, and cry out with the saints of all lands and all ages, "My Lord and my God".

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